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July 1979 \$1.95

# Theatre Australia

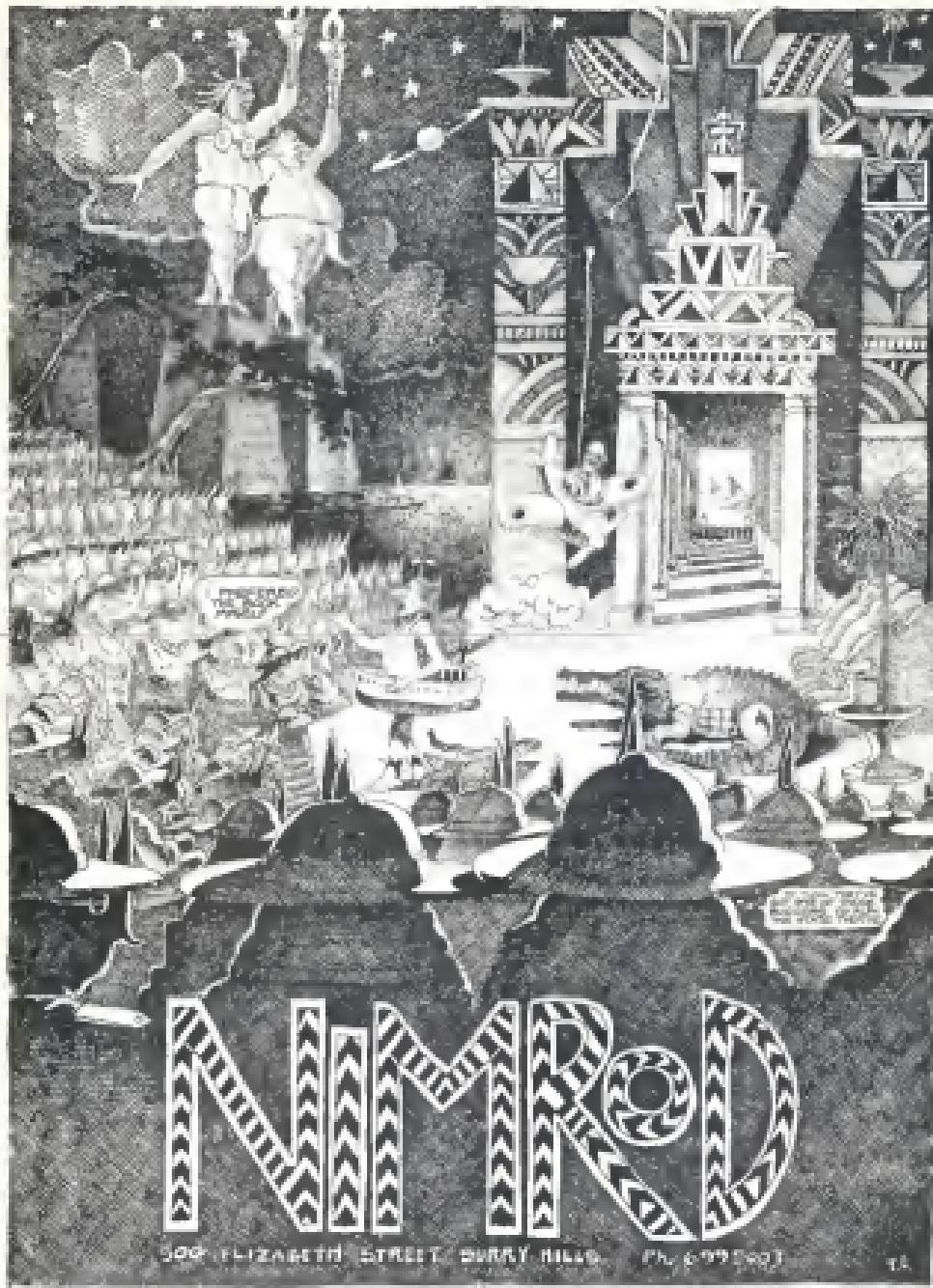
Richard Wherrett heads new  
Sydney Theatre Company  
Big business and the arts  
Aus Ballet's *Coppelia*  
G & S and the S A  
State Opera



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The national magazine of the performing arts

# Theatre Australia

July 1979



Volume 3 No. 12

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GUEST EDITORIAL FROM BARRY DICKINS

## Theatre Australia, what is it?

A *success*? A *failure*? A *workshop*? A *test*, running through the *rehearsal*? *Staged*, and passed *correctly*, perhaps it could be the first *success* certified but... Yes, it's all of those things, and perhaps even further, in a case of those things. Therefore a world wide coverage it cannot even be avoided. And this is not only an infatuation of the *book-trader*, but *publishing* as general. We received, by last mail not long ago, the *newspaper* information that we don't even exist. We exist, in fact, but *really*, not *existed*. We have existed in fact as well as in *dead*, but that was *copying* and *stealing*, *Fraser*, has *stepped* over us with his *disastrous* *The Rehearsal Show* and the *success*, *The Total Entertainment Show*, and we have only *existed* in fact, but *not existed*.

We assumed, to our knowledge, in all *languages* up over the world, even in *French*. We are *enjoyed*, *discussed*, *quoted*, *wanted* for *re-tellings* and *imitations* also, we stand *prudely* beside these other great *causes* of social *distress* and *injustice* *parade* *harmless*, *Twelfth Night*, *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, *The Phantom Thread Of The Wind*, *Death And Desire* and the *most* and *most* *loved* of all *entertainment* *monstrosities*, *The War Cry*.

Indeed, we are popular, studies *success* worthy, *poetic*, and *reverent*. But something is *decidedly* *wrong*. What?

We *over* in a *definite* *need*, that of *populating* the *stage*, making known forthcoming plays, introducing *success* known in *Western Australia* to *our* *mother*, or even to *Melbourne*, that *national* *system* of *calam*

*interests* and *entertainments*. We *but* *I* *love* that *copy*, remember that old standard song song in the sun a *philanthropic* *Drop* *Stones* *Footnote*.

*Melbourne*, *City* *Of* *Light*, *City* *Of* *Footwear*? *But* *Forget*

As one who has had the honour of being *equally* *enlightened*, *locked*, *spun* on, *twisted*, *twisted* in, *spun*, had *good*, *ugly*, *golden*, *requested*, *enthusiastically* *reverent* and even *shot* on the *stage*. I feel honoured to have been *particularly* *now*, as *Theatre* *critic* *mag* *breathes* *under* *our* *feet*, much like the son of *terrors* who *attack* *potions* for *no* *reason*, with *no* *name* of *show* *such* *seeds* to *be* *planted* *unknown* *concrete* *hills* *deferring* *to* *new* *to* *all* the *locking*, *rockhounding* and *rock* *birds*, *be* *seen* *here*!, always, "Why is it like *Theatre* *In* *Australia*?"

It is like *theatre* in *Australia*, because there are *very* *few* *good* *poems*, and *writers* *over* *several* *millions* *of* *shortlines* *book*. A *coman* *had* *play* *recently* *bumped* *out* *at* *The* *Seymour* *Centre* *after* *long* *more* *thought* *than* *you* *could* *point* *a* *sharpened* *pen*, *was* *printed*, *published* and *printed* *almost* *beyond* *belief*, but, as *the* *truth* *of* *the* *play* *is* *in* *the* *background*, it *would* *seem* *that* *there* *is* *control* *of* *our* *lovely* *country* *absolutely* *don't* *need* *the* *world* *millions* *of* *quids* *down* *the* *thrust* *as* *long* *as* *it's* *not* *their* *show*. And *at* *far* *as* *that* *goes*, *not* *their* *style*.

*Theatre* *Australia* is also *further* *locked* *in* *the* *gap* *by* *Gordon* *and* *Goth*, *those* *handy*

*Continued* *on* *page* *13*



"In keeping with our *impassioned* policy, I like to *must* have a *laugh* at "The human *Crash*?" Well, just have to *decide* on — that's all!"

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**Theatre** *Australia* gratefully acknowledges the financial assistance of the *Theatre Board of the Australia Council*, the *Literature Board of the Australia Council*, the *New South Wales Cultural Grants Advisory Council*, the *Artists Grants Advisory Committee of South Australia*, the *Queensland Cultural Activities Department*, the *Victorian Ministry of the Arts*, *The Western Australian Arts Council* and the *Assistance of the University of Newcastle*.

### Manuscripts

Manuscripts and editorial correspondence should be forwarded to the editorial office, 10 Elizabeth Street, Mayfield, NSW 2304. Telephone (02) 411 4176.

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### Subscriptions

The subscription rate is \$12.00 post free within Australia. Cheques should be made payable to *Theatre Australia* and posted to *Theatre Publications Ltd*, 10 Elizabeth Street, Mayfield, NSW 2304.

**Theatre** *Australia* is published by *Theatre Publications Ltd*, 10 Elizabeth Street, Mayfield, NSW 2304. Telephone (02) 411 4176. Distributed by subscription and through agents by *Coronet and Goth*, *Woolworths*, *Sydney Woolly* or by *Tony & Bell Publishers*, *Eastern Australia* by *London Publishing House*.

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# WEEKEND REVIEW



Robbie Land as Santeen Thompson in *Palava*  
Photo Peter Hollingshead

## TRIBUTE

### BOBBY LIM II - "Sweetie Temptress"

"Sweetie is an encounter, a concierge who became a minor star of Hollywood and ended up in New York, doing prime TV and so on. He's one of those guys who finds life a big one-liner gag — all hell's fury! — you know. He's lots of fun but the sort people lose their patience with. I never knew anyone who does as his wife, Maggie, who loves him and then divorces him and remakes him. But she has had a son with her, a boy called Judi who's now about twenty-three and this son Judi is very disillusioned with his father. He's fed up because, as he says, living with him is like playing the straight man in a comedy team all the time."

Anyhow, Father thinks out that he has something wrong with him and tries to even measure with his son. It is both funny and sad and about the mean evening thing I've read. It makes you laugh and cry just as you read through it. But mainly it is a light joyous, anarchic play.

Since I have a happy three year old daughter I don't find the part difficult. I've played comedy before but this is comedy and drama which I haven't tried but I'm enjoying it. I've got a wonderful cast — Hamish Kings, Alan Sustaine, Jerome Neudeck and Tom Balmer from The Realistic Theatre Co. Davidson who plays my role and of course Judi Katz — and great music from Peter Williamson.

It is a beautiful play and a beautiful part."

## THE LAUGHING HEAD

### JOHN ELLIOTT, Australian Theatre Trust

That silly laughable head movement for bedroom farce was a silly expression

commercial no-mate. Originally it was estimated to cost around \$10,000 — you know regular that it was close the one of the country's top animators, but the savings so exceed everyone that in fact they dropped the price in order to do it!

Adairs, the agency that produced it, sent a team both Oz and the PACT branch and it reached the funds of Oz. It is one of six Australian Commercials that have reached the Bank — but this is the only one to reach the Bank of the international section.

If you liked it in the Ozarks where you have Best Film, Best Actor, etc, etc, that is the same sort of system as Best Foreign Film would be. The international section is for any commercial made outside Australia and this is the only Australian commercial to reach the level of this section.

Most of the advertising people think awards only reward bad to the visual selling ability of a commercial, well that has been done both. It has not only sold the show but also been considered humorous.

Awards are probably at the end of the month so we should focus on a few nights later if we get anything. We may not win it but we'll be tremendous to have reached the final."

## WAGGA ARTS IN FERMENT

### ADRIAN MITCHELL

"The contract for the Reserve Banking Co. company's recently appointed artistic director Mr Dennis Johnson, expires on July 3. Various sources report that as a result of meetings between the Banking Company Board and disgruntled retired managers of the Company, the matter of renewal of Dennis Johnson's contract is currently an open question.

At time of writing the Banking Company reportedly is deeply divided in areas of urban policy, especially responsibility, process of re-arranging staff, in functioning of its Board. The Board incidentally consists of Jane Dunn, Brian Chapman, Keith Roberts, retirement, Barbara Barker, Jenny Landis, Bill Jackson, Ray Goodwin, Regis Newman, administrator and Ian Leslie. Four of these Board members — Mrs Dunn, Mr Chapman, Mr Goodwin and Mr Leslie — are co-opted members.

Dennis Johnson has now directed two plays at the Company's 1979 season, Louis Nowra's *Dear Father* (black and white) and Arthur Kopit's *Indians* (broadway) plays that have been staged as part of a disastrous season within the Company, a season which in my view has affected the quality of much their productions.

This is perhaps a better conclusion at the

last that until a definite position is Wagga in currently as a fermenting condition as if the legacy of combustible amateurism is suddenly being challenged by professional attitude. Recent events attest to this possibility. The director of the City Art Gallery rioted dramatically against public speculation concerning the role of amateur and professional input in exhibitions. The local AAT Committee failed to attract the necessary minimum number of subscribers for its 1979 season. Pro-Musica, the local Opera Viva Australia outfit, has found itself in difficulties, both financial and managerial. The School of Arts production of *Brigadoon* received a frank review in the *Wagga Daily Advertiser* prompting the Wagga Singers to complain that their G. S. S. production did not receive AAT or the newspaper complied with the request.

Granted that the Banking Company's difficulties are part of an overall upheaval in the Reserve, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that personal considerations have affected balance of judgement and reasonable objectivity. Equally, much of the Company's current malaise may spring from malaise or merely verbal disengagement of status for the retired actors. Meanwhile, rehearsals are proceeding with *Our Fish* and it is and also with a new one act play by the Company's writer in residence, Sandy McCutcheon titled *Saturday Night at Glad's*. This will be presented as a late night offering. And Wagga wants to judge whether the former will provide good viewing — or merely grapes of wrath."

## BERLINER ENSEMBLE STAR AT NIMROD

### PATI ILLES, General Manager, Nimrod

"We are delighted to announce that Eberhard Scholl will perform his musical songs, poems and poems by Brecht in Nimrod during our season of *The Lyre of Orpheus* between 25th & 26th July.

Scholl has been a member of the Berlin Ensemble for 12 years and has played Around Us All and Schneid with them, becoming their deputy director and general manager in 1977.

He comes to Australia with his wife Barbara, daughter of Brecht, and Helene Wiegand, which makes Eberhard-Scholl Brecht's son-in-law. This will be the fourth foreign country where the show has been performed — after the Peoples Theatre in Milan, Germany and Britain.

The programme will include songs from *Die Dreigroschenoper*, the *Wozzeck* from *Meister Ochsenkopf* and *Remembering Hans A.*, one of Brecht's most beautiful creations. We shall be treated to music by Kurt Weill, Hans Eisler, Paul Dran and others, an evening of

gram present.

The special thanks to KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, for flying the company over the Berlin wall.

## SCHOOLS DAY

**TONY WARIS**, Associate Director, MTC.

"At MTC we've introduced a new idea that year's presenting plays for schools. Rather than the high touring in just for a concert performance, we invite the schools in for a whole day. The morning session is a ninety minute informal demonstration of elements of particular interest in the production — the set design, lighting, rehearsal processes, the construction of costumes, props, set dressing, and so on. We talk of the acting rather than the text itself, so much the emphasis towards the theatrical rather than the literary dimension of the play. We want the kids to see plays as performances, not simply as dry texts to be studied and read in a class room.

The other of the morning session has been impromptu. Instead of a fixed, chanted 'Q&A' audience we have ten-minute breaks by a cast of questions when the performers speak.

The day finishes with a forty minute question session with actors, director, designer, production and workshop people, and we have had some highly perceptive questions and comments on style and performance. They're a very bright audience given the chance, and hopefully we manage to convey at least some of them that live theatre is an exciting, unique and valuable experience."

## THE TWO TIGERS

**ANN FORESTLEY**, La Mama Theatre.

"The Two Tigers is essentially a love affair. It's the way an impression of Mansfield as a writer of *Murphy* in a crisis, tested in a should hopefully comic compensation, and an under-standing, and in the same time show something of Katharine's stability and fury.

The picture of Katharine Mansfield in the play is another white lie, whereas Murray's role covers only a brief portion in a much longer and tested life time — for Murray, Katharine was simply the first of four wives. Katharine's closest relationships outside Murray and her brother Christopher, was Jim Baker, who makes only a vague appearance in the play.

Katherine and Murray were certainly a beautiful couple although not everyone continues to think so. D H Lawrence, under the guise of doctor, crudely perverted them in several of his works, notably in *Clouds of Youth* and *Centaur* (both in *Women in Love*).

The couple were both extremely well-born people and it is not incorporation of that selflessness that gives their relationship — and the play — its depth and quality. Murray lacked any sort of spontaneity that might have helped to set them both free. Never were they able to put 'feel in

each other's company, the only real way they could relax was through latent and memory talk. In fact it was probably only when they were apart that they were together.

After the outbreak of WWI Mansfield had lost her beloved brother — someone from which she never really recovered — and then contacted consumption, the great romantic disease of the day. Aware of her sickness, Katherine you needed someone she could rely on, someone stronger than herself, and of course, Murray was unable to supply that strength. In her last years she turned to the Russian mystic George Gurdjieff and his school to Panta Rhei, and there she died.

The turbulent, determined love affair of those years had come to an end."

## SCHIFFEN ACTING SEMINARS

**ROBINA MILNE**, Director.

"These sessions get back to the basics in Queensland. I was up again up there for about eight hours and I found that my class up there had had opportunity to sit in the film that were being made. What happened was that the film director brought in their own people even though the film was being made in Queensland — this was for the production that the director needed people with experience — for reasons of economy in the long run. I found that my class had no actual film experience and therefore no jobs, so obviously some type of school was needed.

But I couldn't find up there the people with the sort of ability and knowledge that I thought was needed for the classical repertory, so I looked around for the very best teachers or actors who could be trained — and that's how we've come to see Charles Tingwell, Karen Luttrell from Melbourne, Hayley Gordon, Terry McDermott, Terry Gossman (Mark Pines in *Divide & Conquer*) and new kids Helen.

We were forced into the seminar form at first because people were available for only brief periods, but we found in fact that the very condensed programme was considerably rewarding for reaction and interpretation, and people were coming out of it more equipped than from the same forty hours spread over say, twenty weeks. You did everything, rehearsals, everything else, and they all reinforce each other, and the results are simply brilliant.

Well, after eighteen months in Brisbane we looked elsewhere and found that no-one else was doing this so we brought it to Sydney — and because there weren't acting schools, there are — but we are aiming at the best players and the small scenes and the printed public work not though anyone is a beginner. We had a very successful seminar with Charles Tingwell a month ago — terrific — four people are now doing this next one too. You are after long terms of this type of training people know whether they can do the classical model to be an actor, or we're also picking up talented people

who just seem to have a go, and they will know after the week whether they are in it or not.

## PAST 1979

**BARBARA ALLEN**

"Festival of Australian Student Theatre at AST 79 is the process of being organised at the University of Queensland. FAST will be held from the 16th August to 2nd September.

Close to campus there are four theatres, an outdoor amphitheatre and other rehearsal workshop spaces, which will be available for FAST's use.

Productions from drama groups of all tertiary institutions in Queensland are invited to perform. A programme of role-capping workshops will be conducted by well-experienced professional actors. The workshops will cover as many aspects of theatre as possible, including script analysis, scene theatre, writing and special technical.

The overall aim of FAST this year is to help students in a better, more rounded understanding of theatre.

It is hoped that working with others who are interested in theatre will provide an interesting week for all participants."

For details, registration and accommodation, contact Anne Pappa, FAST Coordinator, University of Queensland St Lucia, Qld 4072. Phone 311 1811.

## QTC FLYING HIGH

**EDDIE SHREWDY**, Education Officer, Queensland Theatre Company.

"Play! Come A Flying, which the Queensland Theatre Company will tour as part of the year's secondary schools tour, sponsored by the Queensland Arts Council, came in the spirit of our wanting to include something that was originally Queensland at the root.

After I'd done some early research into the history of aviation in Queensland, I felt we had the material for the kind of play that we wanted. As Douglas Muster, an experienced actor as well as writer, was committed to write for us.

Basically we're presenting a documentary revue that looks like years of travel by QANTAS. When you consider that, ten years ago, school students could catch a flight on the moon, it's important that we help them realise that all of this has developed from such small beginnings in an short time.

It's also very much a story about the people involved in early aviation in Queensland, many of whom have descendants living in a way where we're still playing.

This is itself has led to a lot of pre-production enthusiasm in the play. We've had lots of letters, newspaper clippings and photographs sent in by people who've heard that it's in

(Continued on page 23)

Ray Stanley's

# WHISPERS RUMOURS & FACTS



Maybe a group of Australian playwrights, via the Australia Council, could follow the example of the Canadian dramatists who have been writing new stories around Brian in a pair of pilot projects to promote Canadian playwrights about. The five were selected, apparently, to reflect the different regional perspectives and stylistic approaches central to the range of Canadian theatre during the past ten years. Through several discussions and selective readings, they have been illustrating the diversity of work being done in that country today.

With all those tempting offers Gordon Cluster is musing whether one would fit while he returns to Australia permanently. When, before he left these shores, I suggested that might happen, he told me emphatically he would always live and work principally in the country, but of course situations can change. Meanwhile there is a whisper he is being sought to replace Frank Thring when *The Augriff* returns in late next year.

Some interesting names due to appear with the State Company of South Australia: Jane Readell in *Old What A Lovely War*; Max Peter Cornelius Matulic and probably Len Rixton in *Dolly in the Midwives*. Following her Lygia Langseth in *The French*, Sandy Gore is more than happy she'll be working again with Frank Hansen this year playing Del Connon in *The Alabamian*. *Wandering J. J. Duder* will be in mid-January from when it is staged here.

Carol Browne seems bound not to return to work in her hometown. That mystery film, *Romance in the Borderland* which she and husband Vincent Price were to star in, is now off. Linda Ayres is working on a new play with Francis Kennedy in mind for the leading role. Paloma originally to read another morning, settled on the ABC's *Death Wishes* anthology, *Generations of Men*. After his recent Playhouse production of *State Fair* An Old Man's Gray Hair, a little short story, Scott Ramsay will try a new setting, his attention to some of Burgess's plays.

If everything goes according to plan, in November Melbourne will see two Baulder Devil Jacobs in the Old Vic's soon-to-open *Prospect* (short production presented by Clifford Irving and the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust) and John Williams in John Sutcliffe's production for the Melbourne Theatre

Company. Looks as if Terry Elwell has given up stage acting for a couple of years. He tells me he is now at Curtin University working for his MA. Those reasons for people impressed in film and television work which Charles Tingwell is constantly mentioning, seem to be creating much interest. Certainly few people could be more qualified than "Red" after all his overseas experience.

At I.P. it is being made of Loredana's songs show *Chloe's Travels* with Lorraine O'Brien as narrator and Jason Maynard and Darryl Springfield among the singers. Bert is trying to persuade Sybille Stollery to sing the title of the *Quint* on the record. Leon Fleisher has taken over the lead role from Tom Chaterway in the London production of *Death*. Belinda Johnnies were put out to pasture to report Rosalind Lewis to play with the MTC *Round Way*.

It may be 10 years before the 200th commemoration of the fire plane to be staged in Australia (Faygarth's *The Accounting Officer*) but already I've received a telephone call with the suggestion there should be Australia's most celebrated one of the day in 1989. Maybe someone should even start the ball rolling now. Maggie Miller was certainly a busy girl during June, first there was *Run For Away* at La Mama's忽然 by Robert Risther and at the end of the month she went into Hooper's *Alonzo*. MTC Associate Director Bruce Miles leaves on November 11 (three years to the day he returned to Australia) for a 15-month appointment at theatre throughout Europe and the UK.

Following a personal appearance on stage at the St. Kilda Hotel, where her latest project *Antes* opened the Melbourne Film Festival, Wendy Hughes told me she would love to appear in a play at that theatre. Apparently it was the first time she had ever been inside the building and was most impressed. Barry Posen as a POW officer in *The Scaffold*, in between filming video pretending to be in a flat recently, Singapore, has been slipping back and forth to Tasmania where he's directing a 60-minute documentary *The State Emergency for the Tasmania Film Corporation*.

She that is New York about a suspense queen rating herself *Female Cleo* and in Hollywood new stoppers are needed: Barbara Streisand and Paula Newman ... "There #32, the one after death — we just won't be able to find it," says Lily Tomlin.

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Dear Sir,

I begin by declaring a handicap. I'm a good actor who worked in the Music at the Witch on David Alcott's *Close Watch Alert* — the play your Perth crew apparently got a lot fonder with in Canberra. One wonders why the Indians with crimson.

I declare my handicap because the Perth production had seven PA's in the way of director, actress, publicity angles, or back up, but it was still a solid and strong production, held together by Jenny McNaught's dedication and Wayne Farnham's humour and fine piano work. The cast was great.

Then the director didn't care much for the play, and was looking forward to working on the "contemporary" *City Jager*, that the theatre manager was more interested about last year's data than coming up with a good publicity angle, to break the point over the play's up.

After the first week, I chatted with the director and manager, charging that they didn't care about the production, and as for running a theatre, they'd be flat not running a stall chess stand at the beach on a summer's day. The director saw the play too, apart from opening and closing nights. Mr Newby even less. The cast was asked to take for her office failure, despite Mr O'Brien's attempt to absolve Maxine McDonald Newby.

To the production. According to O'Brien, the main source of worry, by far, was my performance of Sam, "a particularly remote and detached performance" where we took the royal plain the audience never felt empathy for Bill Price at all. Stan didn't want your empathy and the way it played has me detached. Reminds I idly remarked back on Sam, because I was dead against the interpretation that would have him as a rational, reasonable self-setter, who said his jokes to distance people. He was a genuine enigma, whose great love of life was working on comedy gigs as a gig arranger in his halibut past, and as such was a keen observer of his fellow kind. As a result, in opposition to minister Read (Dick Van Dyke's case about Stan — that's where I was at).

As in *Romeo*, I had Stan study over knowing how to handle her, not wanting to have her, but realising she was prepossessing his life choice. In despair, he left her set her up. Stan was a thorough pro, born into the business — a Lancashire proletarian who, at the time of the play, was searching for his class. Perhaps the play does his reputation no honour by focusing on the obvious difficulty he had in his attraction to, or — cast out, women.

As you in the only national review of the play, print, and a sense of knowing when the show a good job complete me to quote two other

reviews: "Michael Price, although briefly director in *Lord*, had the role down a storm, and Lancashire accents to perfection and, even as he descended his rapport system on his way up, he still maintained his air of modish purpose", *Mandy Axler* *The Age* (London) 26th March.

"Michael Price as Stan gives a splendid performance, and at times he bears an uncanny resemblance to the comedian", *Barry Robertson* *Sunday Times* (London) March.

Basically, the Perth production of *Wendy* was a mess up, the director and theatre manager alike, many didn't have their set together at all, and damned if I'll say a good last carry than as a *Act for Mr O'Brien's* comments. In fairness to herself and not for audiences as a whole, hold her on her own as he didder of the cast."

Yours sincerely,  
Michael Price  
Waddington, WA

Dear Sir,

In the May issue of *Theatre Australia* there is a review by Anthony Buckley of the Action review by Anthony Buckley of the Action Company production of *Orpheus*. The headline reads BETTER THAN LAST YEAR'S TRAVESTY. Your editor observes that the company did a disservice to the material with its 1978 production, and that at least this year's production is "better". He then goes on to denounce the current production. The obvious inference is that last year's *Orpheus* must have been an awfully crap.

I directed the 1978 *Orpheus* which was not created by your reviewer. I have no connection with this year's effort. I have no intent to comment on Mr Buckley's rather flatly written review but I must object to his asperges of my "travesty" of last year which also managed to poison these current comments.

The honest and competent production should enjoy a profitable season. It is pleasing to see so many teenagers in the audience — and they were obviously enjoying the play" — *Edmund Mayson*

"There are large slabs of zusammen and power. That Oberon comes up with the set of magic that was missing from the Old Times' *Twelfth*" — *Barney Bremer*

"An unusual and stimulating production. The performance has fire and spirit, is spoken clearly and keeps a good grip on the swelling drama" — *Stephen Mowbray* *Windsor*

Travesty — a ridiculous direction, parady about nonsense — Prague English Dictionary

Yours sincerely  
Matthew O'Brien  
Waddington, WA

Dear Sir,

Could you please bring it to the notice of your WA critics that Gerald Hitchcock and Glyn Hitchcock are not one and the same person. Twice in recent times (most recently in 7th April issue), my brother Glyn has been announced for performances given by me. Although this delights Glyn — he has decided to alternate in your reviews — it is a somewhat galling for me, especially since the only time a performance of mine has witnessed a bad review, the switched cast had the effrontery to call me by my own name.

Although I trust Phil Gleeson and I look alike, sound alike, and we both almost necessarily alike, let alone be served that reception pinches at interviewing someone out of character.

Yours sincerely,  
Gerald Hitchcock,  
West Perth, WA

Dear Sir,

Hoopla's production of *Miss Julie* was mentioned in the last issue as having been written by Anne Sandberg. Actually Anne Sandberg is well known as the author of the classic, *Uncle John*. *Miss Julie* however was written by July Sandberg. It opened in late

Yours sincerely,  
Cathleen Gantner and Roger Polkyn,  
Hoopla, Melbourne.

Dear Sir,

I rarely answer any written criticisms about my reviews in the pages of *Theatre Australia* believing that a person is fully entitled to their opinions of my opinions and that someone who gives criticism should also take it. But the cocked, way-off the mark generalisations of Mr Lazarus, *Appletons* WA prompt me to make a reply.

"More and immediately obvious in his little drabber opinion is that he dismisses my review of the Australian Ballet's *Reverbera* purely in terms of political complaint, there is not even a shred of any reference to the ballet. Spoken-word is author and baller per se."

I would like to know which he has ever seen any production of Spoken-word in any form. In since the Linda Borge version as performed by the Australian Ballet.

I also do not very much whether he had the chance to talk to Mr Lazarus about the baller and his interests in politics.

If he had seen Mr Lazarus I would probably have thought the man very old-fashioned and outmoded compared to all these clever, slyish and snarky TV and radio people he和睦ly hangs out in Hungary but not.

Let Mr Lazarus never forget that *Reverbera* was  
Continued on page 14

# Richard Wherrett

## Interviewed by Rex Cramphorn

I spoke to Richard over lunch. His research and my questions notwithstanding, his plan for the new state theatre company — the sequence of events was random and the style informal. I have transcribed the material from my notes and cast it in the closest possible. The result sounds like a press release or policy statement but I was at pains to cover all the areas Richard wanted to talk and the aim of the interview was, after all, to pick these areas and present them as straightforwardly and clearly as possible.

Richard's appointment as director of the new Sydney Theatre Company was something of a surprise to him. We agreed that among the Australians we knew who had applied, John Bell had seemed the likeliest candidate. Now, interestingly, Richard considers that he should have seen himself as quite as dark a horse. He will be taking up his appointment just ten years after he came to Australia and, although he applied for the position along with the other Merrall decisions to study a finding that Australian directors ought to apply since it would be possible to complain about the acceptance of an application from overseas if no Australian had applied, he reasons now that he wanted the job very much and that is reflected in the progress of his work in the last ten years.

Richard's work has been mainly with Merrall. He has been with the theatre from its inception and, for the last six years, he has been on full-time salary. The period has been good for him and good for Merrall. However, he feels that both he and Merrall will benefit from the change — he sees it as a necessary 'turning-over', a handing. He is aware that one of his last duties at the Sydney Theatre Company is the re-distribution of a policy that will be substantially different from Merrall's and he feels that this will benefit both companies by making them fulfil their roles — with the Old Town was just doing its job efficiently Merrall was forced to take over some of its functions. Similarly, he sees the Sydney Theatre Company as having a responsibility in the area of classic and established Australian writing. He suggested that plays like *Barry McGowan And His Church Going Home* — might well have done better in the opinion of the state theatre company than in Merrall's while Merrall has a rather more adventurous brief in the area of new Australian and overseas writing.

Richard speculates that three full-time



Richard Wherrett

directors were too many at Merrall and that John Bell and Ken Horler will be able to divide the work between them and, perhaps, economicalise director productions.

As part of his policy of making the Sydney Theatre Company a lasting concern in a classical community rather than another competitor for audiences, Richard proposes to have a majority of Merrall's board, as well as members of, say, Q's and Marion Street's boards on the board of the Sydney Theatre Company.

Richard has been appointed director but artistic director, he points out, implying that the role is seen as all-encompassing and not confined to 'artistic' decisions of a theatrical company of independent status (that is to say it is not a government or public service organisation) and he feels that his appointment by the Merrall board reflects a desire on the part of the board and, indirectly, of the Premier, to implement the recommendations of the recent public meeting held to discuss the public opinion on the nature of the company to be set up to replace the Old Town.

With Richard leaving Merrall officially at the end of the season of *The Sea* his first three objectives will be the staffing of the company beginning with an administration and production

manager, the selection of a season of plays and the preparation of his first production. He plans to open at the beginning of 1980. He points out that his first production for the Sydney Theatre Company will also be the first play of the 10th in the Drama Theatre at the Opera House.

Richard feels that the success of the new company will depend largely on his selection of plays, his presentation of them, and on his choice of potential visiting guest directors. He expresses a desire to play with the possibility of using the Opera Theatre for new productions while the Drama Theatre is not available. Touring and transferring would also be possible as such uses.

Richard proposes to maintain a permanent company of ten to twelve actors on contract over one year contracts. He also hopes to maintain a permanent queen with successful productions being invited — particularly in the area of Australian plays. He feels that many plays which have had one production in the last ten years now deserve a consideration and, perhaps, a continuing existence as repertoire.

Richard's aim is to make the Sydney Theatre Company a major company in the way that the BBC and the National are major English

## Glynné — The Man behind the G & S tour

Raymond Stanley

As the selected side into the right; one  
name that we shall probably be hearing more  
and more of in the next years here is that of  
Cathleen Brock O'Hearn.

Already recent of the numerous plays of English as it occurs we have seen in the past few years have really been set up by Australian by Glynn. These have included the National Theatre's production of *The French Page*, Maxine Mazzoni's *1910*, and Romeo Cobert's Australian Aborigines in *Two Crows and Three Sheep*.

Gipson is not yet master Farmer with latest expensive pumping contraption the Avon show but handwipes in order to make a quick buck. He actually has years of classical experience and know how learned from Chisholm with Richard Miles Macmillan Theater ever since he first started to perform in Sir Richard's back garden in 1951. He has been a member of its main program committee since Chisholm opened at Pacific Beach in 1950.

In 1981 Olympia formed his first overseas company — The London Company (insurance at Play! London) — specifically to present English attractions in North America. He was the first presentation of a British production at the Ontario Centre for Performing Arts in Toronto — *Present Arms* — staged from the Michael. The following year saw his co-production at The Kettle of Fish School for Scandal with Ralph Richardson and John Gielgud. Since then he has almost annually staged British attractions at The Kettle.

In May 1977 just before embarking on the  
Australian Marconi tour, Glene presented the

## Final Class

Final Amended version of the original Code resulting in the national law of the USA by a committee.

For a time Glynn was J. C. Williamson Thawes' representative in London, working then under Michael Jolley. Now Jolley will be associated with all the interests Glynn controls in America.

The big one, of course, is the first ever of Australia and New Zealand of the D'Urby Castle Open Company which opened in Canberra in May first, terminates in Perth September 4, playing as well as seven other cities. Three weeks are being staged: The Mikado, 1905; Pag-pag and Isolde.

Glynn together with his wife Kate spent three months in Australia and New Zealand at the end of last year visiting quarry sites in which the 'Silurian' Old Red Cycloids were well

play, taking stage measurements, viewing the publicity and arranging for costumes, leaving nothing to chance, but calculatedly accepting every single step of the trial. It is probably the first time anyone from England has come out in advance and done such a thing. Only an result of aurorean and unceasing reflections about the country which he passed up in his explanatory

As they did with *Marmalade* Glynn and his wife are accompanying the *EDdy Laine* on its tour. During this period he hopes to set up production of the highly acclaimed English play about euthanasia, *When Life Is It Anyway?* which will be produced with Michael Redgrave in London. The last was taken by Tom Conti of TV's *The Christopher Plummer*. Glynn, however, is convinced he will be able to cast in an Australian and probably make a star out of that actor, although the Conti role.

Although by levels state publications need an accurate name to give it a focus on that certain editor cannot be said here. Glynn has the record of his former publications in the country and a list of names for the editor for the new.

Also, Glynn would very much like to find a good Anglo-Saxons play to present at England. One he writes he has the English rights to is John Powers' *The Last of the Knavestment*. He is also a producer of *Regrettable*.

Among his other activities Glynn is the Consultant to Ditch Glynn Associates, an agency formed for the management of an international group of actors, writers and technicians. He was also part author and co-producer of a new TV series for the BBC television in 1971 when the BBC televised 20 one-hour episodes of the series *Black*.

Quay has the Maritime Services Board has not so far been persuaded to implement it. I would hope that the alternative would be to have the port of Sydney treated as a unity District, though since that can be completely removed according to the needs of each port. ....

Indications for Richard of the decision that the company might make were provided by recent tape recordings by the Actor's Observatory Theatre in San Francisco (where he was impressed by the steady flow of passengers from restaurants to classes, the busy day-order process and the double-reuse working situation in London) failure to use the same company performing afternoons in *The Merchant of Venice* and evenings in *Macbeth* at the Shakespearean Crossings (Circular).

Fortunately there is no requirement to take all the problems by the name the first production opened next year — the new company will have time to find a identity and Richard is convinced that the wide spread desire to see the new company succeed will provide a most favourable climate for its growth.

Richard Wherrett, *partner*.

companies of the sort, that 'uses signs to and are engaged by' the began that it will not be the use of names which will attract visitors — he would prefer in his more modesty applied to setting the general level of scores salaries — and believes that if the Sydney Theatres Company continues to put a major share of its body money in for the purpose of managing large-scale productions, rather than for the purpose of present discontinuances from the salaried

Perhaps the only brief that Richard has been given at the studios are the the Sydney Theatre Company must continue to use the Drama Theatre as its 'home'." Protagonist director Tony Robertson responded in the interview by stating that the question of venue was crucial to the formation of the new company and that the limitations imposed on repertoire and acting style by the Drama Theatre were too great. Nevertheless, productions have been presented at the listed Thompson Green Performing Arts Centre, including the 2000 production of *As You Like It* and the 2001 production of *Measure for Measure*.

Richard and also with certain sections of players and producers there is no reason why there cannot contact continue. Richard feels that, as a sign user of the Drama Theatre the Sydney Theatre Company can have some influence on the policies of the Opera House Trust and that the experience of going into the Opera House for a performance can be made as pleasant and stimulating as looking at the building from the outside undoubtedly is. In one crucial area the backstage operations of the Drama Theatre, Richard is as yet to do battle on the question of making the staff members of the Sydney Theatre Company and employees of the Opera House Trust. The staff members are to be seen.

Bored up with the question of the use of the Drama Theatre is the need for an alternative venue for the company. The current administration has been looking for an administrative centre (the Old Vicarage building used by the Old Vic and the relevant administration will not be reused). The theatre likely space vital in size and location in a large town, such as the Queen's Theatre at Croydon.

Our roving reporter extraordinaire Douglas Flintoff assesses the

# 1979 National Playwrights' Conference

## A Grand Event But Lacking Vision

**Douglas Flintoff**

From the back row of the Burton Hall Common Room a dishevelled sleepy-eyed man and woman "At the moment in Australia we are living through a period of theatrical activity without equal since Federation. The subject of the play is the only important issue for the twentieth century. And a sign of all — we can forget that now and move on?" Little Hobby Eels, the divine fool of *Assassins* (Drama for schools). The audience with back and shoulders, written in the knowledge that the last sentence has passed! and for the seventh time, at seven public readings a truly great Australian play has been seen and acknowledged.

It has another issue where the guy says "You gotta get in touch with the audience. That's the first step!" And the other guy has partly wondered what the second step is.

The Australian National Playwrights' Conference and Theatre Conference in an seventh year and nothing like you people were arguing that you don't change something that seems to be working perfectly well as it is — so they decided at the meeting up session to leave it alone. That year people are asking *Has the Playwrights' Conference got legs?*

But first, is it even working? The old issue cropped up again this year. Do the directors have too much power? Do they rule roughshod over the poor, nervous playwrights, gazing in the clouds and driven into terrified panics by the bright lights of the Great Public Debate? Should the Conference worry about the plays or the writers? should they look for great works that bring a flurry of拥rodeos in the final readings or should they assess the potential audience of living plays? Do the financial

figures take over too much? Should the playwrights be given free skills training and historical information, or would the camp then split?

The Playwrights' Conference is also only one of the issues that they will be involved and prepared to deal with to such an extent. Added to this was a new result at the end of the first week in a second by a group of women from Western Australia who wanted a longer say in talk sessions — whatever the world would be about in ordering as you could get, but they keep turning up. Naturally the playwrights are queer than the others — they have their private great passions, so name — but one plus for the Conference was that the playwrights have what they wanted to say and said it not always in the plays.

The other group which makes the Conference the mighty institution which it is, is the actors. The polished performances of the audience and critics who used to run the show was thrown into sharper relief by the amateur, amateur, amateur and amateurish reactions of the group of little bodies when we had to suffer bad ways and bad directors in order to come across and say open as an amateur plays (thirteen but who keep turning up). The enthusiasm for the Playwrights' Conference, therefore, is understandable. Their public commitment to those art along with the private passions of the writers are the twin poles around which the Conference and the Theatre in general, revolve.

Using these two groups, by giving them a common enemy, set the clamour. They are

always a problem. They have very definite ideas about the playwrights have to work with, which in the boltholes workshops at the Conference can cause trouble. Sometimes they suppose that when they conflict with the playwrights, because they dislike them, because they actually seem to be on the same wavelength. At that year's Conference at least four writers fell dismasted by their decisions, although they were all fairly young — male. The playwrights will then to take away with them — but in making the workshop process only slightly rewarding. They now know one thing they don't have to do.

At the Conference were also various shapes of agents, administrators and executives who are beneath our noses here. There were also people called dramaturgs but nobody knows what they are or where they come from. On the whole people were nice to them.

The Playwrights' Conference does need shaking up a bit — just to see what would fall out. What a lack in the moment and great and unique importance. There is no reason why students and critics that is to say that they don't want to be doing anything about it at the moment. It was the year of the Grand Salute for the water clock, Marriage and Death and of processes, some necessary for the scene but what would be good would be a single or reflexive, more needed if necessary, event to set it all together like the legend was right when he said that the Conference was the most important event of the year, and that is because it gives people time to pursue their dreams in peace. As in Australian theatre in general, it is a pity that the dreams are so low key.

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A new Children's TV programme is being made in WA for national screening.

## Falcon Island

### Terry Owen

Children's television with a difference — that's how the Australian Children's Film Foundation describes *Falcon Island*, a five-part television serial presentation to the Foundation and currently in post-production with national release scheduled later this year. The difference is that the action and adventure have to good story telling for kids television pictures that have a number of contemporary social issues.

In the first five episodes, Kari, Paul and Jack, who are part of the small Falcon Island community, become involved in a search for a Dutch wreck off the Western Australian coast. Their plans are complicated by a proposed sand mining venture that splits public opinion in their community and threatens the wreck site. The kids, with help from their friends, find proof of the actual site as the bulldozers are about to move in, and save the ship from total destruction.

The Australian Children's Film Foundation is a subdivision of the Perth Institute of Film and Television (PIFT) who about eighteen months ago set up the Falcon Island project by getting Channel 9 (Perth) interested enough to put up money for script options and script development for a children's television serial to be made in Western Australia and aimed at the upper primary/secondary viewing audience. Local writers Joao Ambrosio and Ross Barnes were commissioned to come up with a range of ideas for the serial.

With the search for ideas well on, PIFT was also looking for \$175,000 in funding. Their first package of investors includes the National Home Network, Channel 9 (Perth), the Australian Film Commission, the Western Australian Film

Commission, WA Press Pty Limited and PIFT itself.

Joao Ambrosio's initial adventure idea was chosen, and Stage script editor Maya Wood came from Sydney for two weeks to review work on the first draft material she had another working visit in January this year.

The cast for *Falcon Island* was recruited locally, and includes Alan Cressell, Joao Ambrosio, Brian Bartels and Steven Lee. Director Peter Maxwell brought key techniques with him from Sydney to join the local crew, and the ten week shoot was completed last Friday establishing the necessary cyclones and the usual bushfire arrived in time during which the necessary filming requirements can't be avoided.

It was a very tight working schedule and Peter Maxwell had words of praise for the local cast and their professionalism. He also made the interesting comment that the local actors would be a real 'plus' for producers looking to sell their film product on the tough Australian market, where the older choice is a very real obstacle.

For parents and public bodies anxious about the quality and content of children's television, *Falcon Island* rewards you the thing. As far as the studio and screen, it's the only cliff hanger series for children in production in Australia. It also one of the very few programmes based on original, non literary material. PIFT as the production-organisation have scheduled the final eight episodes of *Falcon Island* to go into production in October this year.



Location shooting for *Falcon Island*



Joao Ambrosio

You won't find *Falcon Island* on a map of some existing or paper drawing of a real West Australian port, but spring to Rottnest Island, off-shore from Fremantle and out of season a quiet village community of mere 200 permanent residents.

Joao, who has had a lot of experience in the business of writing for children, named *Falcon Island* to be decidedly Western Australian to the point of a 17th century Dutch wreck which in Australian maritime history, calls the waters around our claim. She believes there is such a thing as Western Australian writing, and she sees no reason why Western Australian themes, given high quality packaging and presentation should be successfully marketed nationally and even internationally.

The theory that imagination is a source of energy and form for writers as well as painters and carvers and can confirm in isolated places like Perth, if not in advertising, in working within living, among other places in a village in West Africa or a small southern town in the great US of A, that is the problem facing those writers in that publishing and bookellers seem to believe in an article of faith that focuses with a regional setting in clutch to the market. But of course it can just a gateway of tourism. Joao Ambrosio believes that the powerful images of landscape on people and the ways in which people deal with each other within their landscape are legitimate and marketable ingredients for a writer to work with. As a Western Australian, her eye to write in the way fellow Western Australian artist Robert Pamper paints



International Year  
of the Child 1979

# CHILDREN'S THEATRE

A Supplement to mark the Year of the Child

## Theatre in Education

**Rehearsal, Visit, Convalescent, Absentee** — not the usual adjectives to describe a school day but certainly the description of a group of people recently involved in a drama-in-education production — except of course that one could also add happy or even tragic, on occasion.

Gradually drama and dance are getting more, now updated to include jazz and reggae, not just in the curriculum but as part of the experience of learning. Whether it is through drama, helping with number work for the primary classes, junior secondary pupils discussing the social aspects of *Let's Face Away*, the TIE play by Michael Core about a thirteen year old girl who does — and learns to understand why and that it was not really necessary or the much former year 12 *Death Brother Linda* shown by English playwright David Campbell at all the possible sort of two adolescents who have grown up in a harsh culture with only 'Cook' for company. Watch the freedom and individuality become salient in the audience seats for any discussion following the play, and the discussion will point up the play's relevance and the possibility that that situation could be a part of life now or in the future. At a primary level of course children may not yet be an audience part of a play for the time is not at their school, for example in *Promises*.

This participation aspect is important, for in the National Report, education and the arts the joint study of the National Commission and the Australian Council, it is noted that

... young people prefer a more active and episodic form of theatre in which film and television have accustomed them or they don't like walking through the usual three act play, even if they do get the chance. The MYC in Victoria are also tackling the same problem but by staging schools for an all day programme where the performance and production side of the play in question are discussed in the morning and after a special interview about a more disastrous if required.

With the TIE companies, puppet theatres, music ensembles and drama groups touring the schools, the topic historically must be greater than ever before. Add this to the family con-

### Ardyne Reid surveys the national TIE scene



From *Whoopee* at Bogong Arts  
From The Tragik Theatre



Emily Bry at Linton in John Morris as Bishop in *Miss Prudie*. Photo: The Tragik Theatre

cerns, the youth officers with various agencies and both companies and the known children's theatre groups and work-shops and the drama experiences available to most children a doublet.

Without doubt though the difficulties experienced by teachers of drama in schools are widespread throughout all Australia. Not only is drama a non academic subject unless linked with English, for an literacy event, but it appears to be viewed with suspicion by the authorities and, as the media usually of the young and energetic school teachers, tends to be overruled at too frequently.

Few schools have sufficient space for drama, or can offer only a performance with stage that doubles as an assembly hall platform or a gymnasium for travel and mobile material and adequate preparation and follow up difficult to organise. This applies throughout the school year whether it is suffered by the primary teacher expected to teach in a largely traditional manner or the secondary teacher faced with script changes or lack of directions from following a TIE production — however drama in other areas off an indoor areas and film and television are rarely more than elective courses even in a tertiary level.

Maybe the differentiation between theater (drama) as a performance and drama — the workshop situation in which students discover, explore and develop their abilities both in the field of human relationships and in response, experimentation and inventiveness — needs to be emphasised for the drama, however can use this specialised teaching method to stimulate, engage and discipline a full range of topics from maths to modern languages. It is of course especially relevant to the literatures and the social sciences. Since inadequate programmes rarely go beyond set-up situations and drama games and there seems to be a major difficulty in developing courses that combine development and exploratory aspects of drama with an acceptable measure and content, this becomes a problem area and yet it is accepted that drama is complementary to the TIE experience (whether from State companies, touring puppet groups or local groups) to that

theory can be used as evidence. No Puritan experience and no past history no longer like a distant past shadow.

#### Comments

Despite the Tasmania's Salomance which goes back into schools, the community is large and diverse, with across subject divisions with material based on specialist research and related communication through speech, music and video and also in the deaf — of a format matched to Salomance. The Tasmanian TIE company productions will have been well thought through for preparatory and post performance discussions in the schools before it is also evident in one term from the response that the year's new production, *The White*, is accepted. Tasmania is lucky for Salomance funded originally by the Arts and Council in a joint theatre education programme and now expanded to the creation of two new teachers by the Tasmania Education Department, is able to include both a visiting and in schools liaison officers in their group. Thus based in or near all schools in Tasmania, and they range broadly in both content and style — from productions like *Lady Beothur*, *Little Sister* to a musical documentary study of the male cancer movement *I'll Be in the Band or Framboise*, a participation play about the creation of men for the primary levels.

But this is not to say that Tasmania is the only State with a blossoming TIE company.

#### Victoria

The Education Department in Victoria have produced a discussion booklet on their Review Board's action. This is an Education Board's production of *Old King Cole* analysing the effects of participative style communication and their impact as a means of developing awareness of socialisation. This is of course an Drama Resources Centre staffed by English qualified teachers, some of whom are working in TIE and who can offer a drama consultant in line with the school advice and even liaison with a class teacher. No admissions is charged.

The programme and personnel have expanded since inauguration in 1977 and now

include two new country teams — in Hobart and Bendigo — but only because the Centre decided they were important and not their own staff to provide these. These TIE Community teams have each emerged to try two promotional access to work with them. The Education Department in Victoria is behind the Drama Resources Centre, it is finance that mitigates against their extension despite the success for example of the Salomey Myra Church Trust — but this must apply all over Australia.

#### Queensland

The Queensland Study Group on Education (QSG) hold the view that:

- ... no school system has been educated until it has been involved in at least one of the creative arts, both in doing and appreciating, to the stage of having some understanding of the creative values and possibilities of the medium and this probably sums up everyone's viewpoint. With an education base in care — twelve years, each of which provides approximately four weeks work for a company touring schools, the Queensland Arts Council's aim of one performance per term to every school in the State at a maximum admission price of \$1.00 is a major endeavour. TIE here is represented by the Brisbane North Education Region Team which provides a joint unified language learning experience for the primary schools, now also being extended by the TIE teams in Brisbane South and Brisbane West to provide a drama structure which guarantees facility with the process of language and enjoyment in drama.

As elsewhere in Queensland the Arts Council uses a standard for team structure, although groups may also approach schools privately in which case the areas for standard are the principal. In NSW the TIE groups are also subsidised by the Arts Council under negotiation with the schools to take drama anywhere.

#### New South Wales

The Top End Theatre is an example for NSW. Formed in 1971 it has been funded by the Theatre Board of the Arts and Crafts Council and the Seymour Centre and with grants from the Schools Commission and the Disadvantaged Community Arts Program. The Top End has produced programmes looking at the stories of migrants (Allen Fralby 1973), racism and sexism (Mike Holt 1974), Norm and Ahmed and joined in a mathematical workshop programme in two specific resource schools. Using the TIE at Macrossa, Top End also produces a documentary drama for 14 adult teachers. It also provides in Service Workshops and entered a team in NSW for the SA TIE Team Trustee in SA Education Department Team.

#### ACT

As with the rest of Australia, NSW children have a number of options and alternative programmes available to them. It depends on who is around and where you live.

For instance if you live in Canberra the figure Company's TIE programme in ACT and NSW schools is implemented by the Youth Theatre and the company also supports and is granted an ad hoc funding in the ACT Association for Drama in Education.

#### South Australia

The concept of drama as different from theatre is also specifically defined in SA where drama, as 'exposed', is seen as free flowing and relativistic theatre and the effective curriculum and theatre in education is seen to provide the skills and techniques of an actor and to provide a link between a year or performance in a theatre and the school curriculum. The three government, or Education Department, financed teams, Theatre TIE and the STC's Maggot group, work in the schools together with the TIE, four puppet companies who are partially funded (Maggot 1978, Redhead puppeteers, the world premiere of *Uncle Macrae* and the *Disadvantaged* commissioned by the Gastra Institute "dazzled with magic and illusion" and a test the rest of the Maggot

Continued on page 48.



The Salomance Theatre Company



International Year  
of the Child 1979

# COME OUT 79

Andrew Bleby \*



There are great dangers in organising any celebration or commemoration of anybody's year. There are temptations to capitalise on the coming upness of the date — to pander to retrospection. There are against events in which both children and adults, and older educational experiences which suffer from being so overwhelmed with good intentions that they usually lack imagination or enjoyment.

COME OUT 79 consciously tries to avoid these pitfalls. COME OUT 79 is the third biannual festival of visual arts and performances arts for young people in South Australia, and is possibly the most important arts festival in this country. Indeed, in claims to be the largest festival of its kind in the world, already involving more than fifty thousand young people in Adelaide, and many more thousands in country areas. Run by the Adelaide Festival of Arts with major support from the South Australian Education Department and The Savings Bank of South Australia, COME OUT has now reached a stage of maturing where it can no longer be judged by the media or the public as simply another thing to look. When you discover that many of Adelaide's leading young artistic talents are working in the field directly because of their experiences with COME OUT 77 you realise that the far-reaching powers of such an artform need认真 by under-estimated.

Since its inception five years ago, COME OUT has attempted to provide and ensure not a excessively small budget a balance of activities covering the wider range of the arts in performance and participation for all ages between four and twenty-four. It has aimed

not you will agree, and one which this year gave rise to 76 different events associating in over 300 performances, workshops, exhibitions and outcomes over a two week period.

But now and very close to do not make a festival. Unlike Adelaide's major festival of arts, the success of COME OUT cannot be judged by the number of people who placed their hands on us in front of the world's most revered practitioners of the arts. Because we are talking of young people, we are talking of potential, and we are culture not only of the quality of the finished product, but the quality of the process through which these young people have gone. Processes are a vital part of COME OUT's success criteria, and it is interesting to note that the most successful programmes of COME OUT 79 were those in which there was real evidence that what we were witnessing was the product of young minds who had come to grips with their creative medium and been able to use

\*Andrew Bleby is Education Officer at the Adelaide Festival Centre, organising a varied programme of performances, work shops and other activities for young people in the Centre's four theatres. He is the South Australian delegate of the Australian Youth Performing Arts Association and a member of the organising committee for COME OUT 79.

it for their own expression, regardless of the traditional restraints imposed upon it by the adult masters of their art form.

At The Park, a new school on the industrial northern outskirts of Adelaide, a group of young school girls were given the opportunity of not only expressing themselves through theatre, but finding out what they wanted to express. The result was *Only a Girl*, a raw style production presented with life and feeling about what it is like to be a girl, and what being a girl means in the rest of the world. It wasn't Shakespeare, and it wasn't a text book discussion but it had a thoughtful theatrical honesty that allowed through to tell us that theatre could still be a powerful part of medium which doesn't have to remain the domain of a centre of the educated elite. A group of equally inspiring kids presented *From a Dog to a Sheep*, a performance detailing the horrors of a small communal migration by a large peasant publishing company. Not only did the actors explain the situation but forced the audience to take a stand on it by using the media of radio, television and newspapers themselves to represent the protagonists.

COME OUT is not, however, simply a parade of young people's achievements in the arts. It also involves the "adult" arts and their world in working with and for young people. Apart from helping to give leadership to young people in a world which will soon be past masters, the young at heart, or bring them to established performers, companies their responsibilities

Continuation page 34

Television



Soft sculpture





International Year  
of the Child 1979

# FLYING FRUIT FLY CIRCUS

IAIN McCALMAN reports on the newest circus organised by the Murray River Performing group and performed by eighty children under a big top in Albury Wodonga.

People must be absorbed. They can't be absorbed in leisure, nor yet they can't be absorbed in work, they are made for it. You must have us, though. So says Mr Story, circus master and supervisor of Charles Dickens' Hard Times. For Dickens the circus represented the very essence of life, a symbol of natural life as a human community, an expression of the values of equality, imagination and play against the unity of indoctrination and its mercenary philosophies. Says Jules, the child hero of his novel who penetrated all these大人 values, would have found himself at home in Albury Wodonga during the week of 13-19 May when the Murray River Performing Group staged their Flying Fruit Fly Circus.

For not only was this a circus dedicated to Dickens' ideals, but it was a children's circus as well. The performers were eighty children of diverse ages drawn from a variety of local schools. As eleven year old designed the poster, two other school girls wrote the three acts. Children involved themselves in every stage of the production design — writing the "Circus On" lyrics, making props and helping with stage management. Perhaps for this reason the audience filed into the tent on the first day looking rather self-conscious, regarding it as an institution far from the moment "the grand opening" began, their doubts sorted to each other.

The young circus wagon took into their circle their song, "The greatest show on Earth has had The Flying Fruit Fly Circus" and the magnificently ridiculous sounds of Bert (Lugh Conley) and his Banjo Band lit the tent. Two children ran out the big juggling Tambourine trap simultaneously and took themselves into a twirl was pyramid. A boy rolled a stick flame dancing on his finger, and usually began in at the end, while three flame girls (magnificently short, dancing with other experts) A monkey soon crossed the ring, waving his tail, behind him legs of acrobatic merit. A great hand wave told us the balance and colour in a large acknowledgement of their unusual class.

Among the seventeen magnificently professional acts that followed, a few stand out. Appropriately it is the 90ties who had the first half of the show. Dressed in superbly costumes, accompanied by noisy small music, they started up fast ropes to perform an acrobatic but graceful aerial perch act. And always there is excellent clowning to relieve the tension — the Sillymen and their daftish but howled, the ubiquitous Fremen, and the acrobatic El Stupido performing Chaplinique "Cafe capri". In the second half the acrobats of the multitude give in a brilliant circus aerial act, in a whirling tangle hair twists three skilled acrobats and even reflect

by putting his hand in a boy's mouth.

The circus audience proves as diverse as the acts themselves. The first thousand who attended over five days included dancing parents and grandmothers, tiny tots and school children, teenagers, young and older school children, business men and women. In fact the reflected the extension of an international form which transcends usual boundaries of place and age in part it was the pull of nostalgia. The older ones go some way also towards explaining the success of the crowd reaction. The two adult acts, a black stage and spectacular aerial display, produced an apoplectic response, but the spectators changed sharply whenever children were performing. It was like a cross between a school prize-giving and the Melbourne Grand Final, a compound of emotional empathy, tension, neighbour and community pride.

The achievement of the children is overwhelming personal confidence, complete competence and total absorption in what they do in a mere six weeks of rehearsing. Their dazzling dexterous acrobatics and sheer stamina (10 performances plus rehearsals in five days) would shame many professionals. Spreading such an intense excitement in the domestic trade and met local teachers who built at the home of continuing school extensions, might pause to consider the challenges associated with running eighty regions of disparate age and size in the state of showing juggling, pony balancing, eating and juggling, or the logistic implications of organizing them for aerialists, pony makers, make-up and scene changing. Secondary teachers will perhaps build on the enthusiasm to future educational programmes, particularly if the circus is to become an annual event as the MRPG intend. Certainly the people must be committed. No single such a thing celebrates the capabilities of youth in the International Year of the Child.

Evaluating the unique significance of the Flying Fruit Fly Circus for Australian culture in general and the MRPG in particular is more difficult. Unquestionably the circus is a major artistic event. It is the first full children's circus in Australia, comparable only with Los Angeles' Circus in South and the travelling youth circus in the USA, though differing from both



Flying Fruit Fly Circus



International Year  
of the Child 1979

## Children's Theatre in America

CHRISTINE WESTWOOD reports that "Not one company appeared to say how and what they were really saying to children, and those who thought their work was somehow 'neutral' can't ever have thought that even a non-statement supports some of the inferences and puns of things as they are".

In March, the Professional Children's Theatre Presenters and Producers Committee in America organised a National Showcase of "some of the finest professional touring groups performing for young people today". This article looks at the aims of that Committee, what the Showcase revealed about children's theatre in America today, and reviews a selection of the sixteen companies finally selected to perform.

The formation of an official group within the professional theatre, such as the Committee, was an important step taken in 1971. Headed up by the remarkable Carol Jenkins of New York's Syracuse Center, the Committee represents a unified front of over 100 people "trying to bridge the gap between those who create theatre for children and those who buy and present it in regional theatres, large or complete schools and community centres. The fact that such a bridge-building can be attempted at all is remarkable. If the presenters and the producers can indeed bury their justifiable antagonisms to work together, maybe the next National Showcase will not be such a recognition of unpredictable and inadequate pop. And although the Showcase did not aim to debate the nature and function of children's theatre, surely this year's efforts supersede the need for a formal analysis concurrent with each year's event.

Part of the problem which may well be solved by the unlikely union of producers and presenters in the cut-throat competition between the producers for full bookings, and not too only within the Committee's efforts to alleviate some of this competition by working towards joint funding and creation of children's theatre programmes. For without such dialogue, critics are comprising what might be "fair" in favour of ill-founded notions of what the presenters, name and abilities deserve, and then magnifying these errors by classifying them with plough, hypodermic and gun-toting butchers, and making new predators as cheap as possible so that they become comparatively attractive to the presenters. The presenters' side is as difficult. Having little money within their own organisation's budgets for children's theatre, they are forced to choose the best of the worst, and in doing they themselves appear to lose sight of what constitutes good theatre.

It is hard to believe that all these people, who have presumably chosen to work in children's theatre because of their own enjoyment of and commitment to good theatre, can be in unaware of the elements of encouraging and challenging

theatre for children, after seeing what was doled up to them at the Showcase as the "best". I think that adults actually spend their hard-earned pay packets on such entertainment by choice, then they must only see adults as adult. The productions represented at the Showcase are a great disservice to theatre, and must be objectionable to children. Children are not insensitive, more stupid than adults — merely less experienced. As adults, our obligations and responsibilities in children, though, are not so much trivial and unrefined entertainments meant which extends them needlessly, needlessly and aimlessly.

My objection to nearly all the shows presented was the uttering of total obfuscation of the form and content. It is hard to imagine that in America today, people who are professionally involved in such a presentent aspect of our culture, can appear so utterly oblivious in current educational and sociological contexts and setting. Not one company appeared to see form and what they were really saying to children, and those who thought their work was somehow "neutral" can't ever have thought that even a non-statement supports some of the inferences and puns of things as they are. By ignoring the social, cultural and political role of art, the children's theatre presented at the Showcase was quite nihil, a snarling and repulsive.

I attended the Showcase as a potential presenter rather than as a reviewer. Therefore, my basic premise was: Would I buy that show, and if not, why not? I have had to be objective, otherwise what I have written would be as dull and repetitive as the productions themselves but all the institutions are off. I like the Adolescent Festival Centre (Andrew Shulley) for people who wish to follow up the companies represented at the Showcase.

STAGE ONE: *The Men in Our Cage*  
Leavenworth, Kentucky

The Men in Our Cage, written and directed by Moses Goldberger, is a play for adolescents which

deals with the often painful transition from childhood to adulthood as a positive way to be initiated to the memory of Margaret Mead, and attempts to provide useful parables for adolescence in contemporary western society. It is a sincere effort to use the theatre to say something worthwhile, and to provide characters which are real enough for ready identification by adolescents — and about time too. They are, for obvious reasons, a very difficult group to relate into a theatre, and yet the audience present at the Showcase seemed to have delighted in a play relevant to themselves. But why is it that the characters play out their problems in no particular dramatic society? Why do they wear hats and ponchos from Mexican, Hawaiian, African and Australian Aboriginal cultures? Does Stage One think that kids won't notice the cultural inaccuracy? Or is Stage One occasionally saying that "all primitive cultures are the same"? What would strengthen kids there if I presented it, especially using when play non-stages? Would we do justice, except in my theatre, and if not, should we expect teenagers to accept? Yet this production is serious in intent, quite well written, with moments of great magic and humour, and would provide visitors with lively spring-breaks, for school, tourist and vacationing discussions. Would I buy this production? Maybe.

### LOVELACE THEATRE COMPANY

Pittsburgh, Pa. Review  
What did I, or any of the children present, get out of forty minutes watching puppets being put through a number of camp routines? Would a child or teacher not already know enough about different styles of puppetry to do it themselves better? What value is there in having a doll child Anne puppet opening and closing her mouth to a tape of "Jamboree" (quarreled) from the camp show *Aladdin*? What value is there in watching the film? Will everyone be slightly tickled, as the puppets pointed the Continued on page 42

# Is there enough business support? Should the arts have to beg funds? Where does the tax-deductible dollar go?

# BIG BUSINESS AND THE ARTS

Pick up  
any theatre  
programme  
and you are likely to  
find a few lines in  
small print somewhere  
assigning the credits that thank  
specific firms for their help —  
someone for cigarettes maybe,  
or drinks, or the loan of furniture

or musical instruments, it is a form of  
advertising and one does not think  
twice about it, it is a means by which  
the theatrical world and the business  
world can happily and easily be of  
mutual help to each other.

Looking beyond this there is actually an  
enormous amount of support given, some  
quietly acknowledged some given in relatively  
elaborate fashion. It can go unnoticed that  
such and such a festival, for instance, would not  
have been able to function or that some theatre  
company would have no transport if one of our  
larger firms had not come to their aid.

Surveying this area, though, when comes over  
toad and claw at the big firms as well as other  
the arts with federal and state agencies, go for  
the large establishment companies rather than  
using them out to help the independent, the  
ambitious and the avant-garde. Of course it is  
only natural that their firms were an ardent  
reason to come from their tax deductible dollar  
so as possible to have an audience with the per-  
forming arts. But when so many stay in the  
background their company is hardly going to get  
out on as far as the future of, say, a  
Grauman's Imperial theatre group or a City  
concerted music ensemble, to mention a few.

The Festival of Sydney has sponsored this  
year in a notably high profile way by the  
Australian Knight Company, and the Festival of  
Perth similarly by the Perth Building Society.  
Bank of NSW or at Quantas is involved with the  
Opera and the Australian Ballet. In fact  
both have backed the Australian Opera to the  
hilt and at the other end of the scale, put in the  
revolving stage for a small-budget theatre.

Uniquely just \$1,000 in 1976 to the somewhat  
controversial Popular Theatre Trust in Queen's  
land for which state Unilever had a hand and given its  
major commitment, but it would appear that  
once it discovered that the company was playing  
downs which questioned the role of the big  
money companies in the welfare of the arts,  
respectively demand the grants to  
have been an establishment one and closed  
the parts money from them off. Another money  
company, Comexco, actually sent a cheque

toaged PW man from Melbourne to take off  
the group after a segment from one of their  
shows had appeared on the Queensland The-  
atre Royal, Rockhampton, TV.

Group 1981, it would claim, not to its  
conscience, by far and large had established and  
established to arts, among "sustainable" support  
and if small only to look to help with  
tools, money or hardware if they are right and  
helpful.

There are available exceptions such as the  
Myer Foundation's support for the Murray  
River Performing Group. Myer may not get  
much street value from this activity, but the  
benefits to the arts are substantial. It creates  
both company involvement, and the  
opportunity, for children in particular, to see  
and maybe participate in real live theatre — and  
therefore provide the embryo of a future  
audience.

To quote from the first annual report of  
ARTS — a company usually run up by Myer  
and others to pay for the relationship between  
the business world and the arts and not about which  
more and more — is a paradox that

the community benefits from beyond the  
immediate purchase of a dinner, jacket  
giving or other product or service of the  
arts, and therefore justify the additional  
assistance that the arts require.

Further, in some areas, what industry is  
taking from peoples lives, the arts are giving  
back, though here not in giving out such  
immeasurable benefits as "quality of life". An  
argument can be mounted though, that the arts  
are providing a real service and should not be  
burdened the monolith. Oliver Town, president  
that they do when are

Still, this additional income has to be found  
and established as an ongoing relationship. In  
terms of economic areas it tends naturally to  
disappear — in through the disappearance of the  
arts in such periods but not periods.

Overall, there is ready support for both the  
conservative and the classical — especially the  
opera and ballet — stages, television equipment  
renting and buildings. The following is a survey,  
by no means exhaustive, of the kind of help  
companies give.

## QANTAS

Uniquely, Qantas has given over \$75,000 so far this  
year. Their present policy is to give in such a  
way that a growing audience for the performing  
arts is assured. Hence major schools for one are  
going to the "Open Access" scheme. They are  
largely concerned with their home state and  
have funded a series of new plays by Queensland  
playwrights as La Bete as well as the early

Childhood Drama Development Project there.  
But they have helped with hardware in other  
states, the revolving stage for Moran Street,  
acting at Broken Hill Theatre, Broken and a  
sound system for the WA Ballet. Even their  
more modest donations have been fairly  
considerable amounts — a donation in 1977 to  
the Queensland Light Opera for Elgar and  
\$1,000 to the Brisbane Actors Company for an  
Aidaless play and \$10,000 to the QFC for  
printing programmes. Their other major area of  
support is for local music in Queensland.

## CALTER

Some examples of Caltex support are the  
Benevolent Programme, the Australian Opera  
and the Festival of Jazz and Dance in one  
position with the Festival of Sydney. They have  
also given the Shepparton Theatre for Young  
People, Soothie, enough for a good video set up,  
an electric piano and a few hundred of photo  
graphs reproduced, through their Youth Fund.

## QANTAS

One spokesman's statement that "due to the  
support by Qantas of various national and arts  
groups, Australia is able to see many overseas  
performers and artists that would not otherwise  
be possible" is almost self-evident given the  
quite large amount of traffic in performers both  
ways, that they benefit free. However this same  
man at this to stay out of the public eye, their  
duty for privacy is respected — their support  
appreciated.

## TAA

Similarly TAA have an account arranged for  
a group to have the exclusive use of an aircraft.  
They put conference out to the Australian  
Opera and Ballet companies, work with  
cultural societies and commercial companies  
and their historical section has been arrested  
by security protection by the Commonwealth  
Police.

## SINGAS

AGL's sponsorship of the Festival of Sydney  
to the tune of \$100,000 this year, included the  
Festival of Folklore, the City Family Theatre and  
the New Year's Eve Party.

## Peter Stuyvesant Cultural Foundation

The Foundation dedicates about \$100,000 a  
year. Its credits include the 1976 run of the  
London Symphony Orchestra, Ballet Scholar  
Contested on page 31

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#### **BREWELL THE CHAPEL PERILOUS**

Laroke University English III, University of New England Aust. Drama, Darling Downs IAE Drama, University of Queensland Contemporary Aust. Drama, Randen State College Contemporary Aust. Drama, Mitchell CAA Aust. Lit. elective, University of Sydney Aust. Lit. & MA Theatre Tradition

#### **HILLARD A STRETCH OF THE IMAGINATION**

University of WA Eng. Lit., Monash University Modern Aust. Lit., Melbourne State College B coll. (general secondary) Aust. Lit., Gippsland IAE Contemporary Lit. I, University of New England Aust. Drama, WA Institute of Technology English I Aust. Studies, University of Sydney Aust. Lit. & MA Theatre Tradition, James Cook University, English II, Aust. Lit.

#### **McNEIL THE CHOCOLATE FROG and THE OLD FAMILIAR JUICE**

University of New England Aust. Drama, Goulburn CAA Theatre Arts II, Randen State College Contemporary Aust. Drama, Mitchell CAA Aust. Lit.; Mt Waterley Police Academy

#### **NEWTON INNER VOICES**

University of NSW Drama III Aust. Drama, University of Newcastle Drama I, University of Queensland Contemporary Aust. Drama

#### **BREWELL THE FLOATING WORLD**

University of WA Eng. Lit.; Laroke University English III; University of Newcastle Drama I, University of New England Aust. Drama, Randen State College Contemporary Aust. Drama, Mt St Mary's Teachers College Eng. Lit. III, University of NSW Drama III Aust. Drama

#### **WILKINSON DAWN'S PARTY**

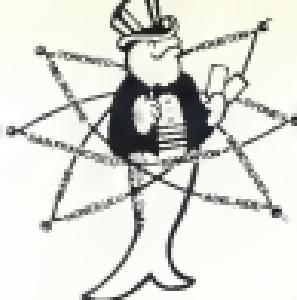
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#### **THE CURRENCY PRESS**

The Australian Drama Publisher  
87 Jersey Road, Woollahra, NSW 2025  
Distributed by Cambridge University Press

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# Proliferation of Secret Britain Plays

## Irving Wardle

British audiences being what it is, the publicity decisions of the 1970s have brought with them a painful descent of Secret Britain plays, gradually breaching a tragic lid, however, and causing us to the country's body politic to show a remorseful introspection of licensed police, taking no calculated conspiracy, assassination camp contingency plans, and other committee room decisions which will always enable the old place to catch up with America's Special Research Bureau and the KGB.

Despite my reservations at this proliferation genre, I have to acknowledge that it sometimes yields effective plays, such as the laudable David Lichfield's *The Wives' Royal Court* (Barbican), a speculations on the Army counter-intelligence training which opens with a cartoon film identity trick, and develops into a vigorously dismaying debate on the ethics of righteous terrorism with its own weapons. At least Mr Lichfield refrains, as far as his colleagues from previous worrying possibilities in accompanied fact.

The grandfather of Secret Britain drama is Howard Da Silva's *The Churchill Play*, which the Royal Shakespeare Company have brought to London (Warehouse) this year after its Nottingham premiere. It has not impressed with keeping.

Originally it faithfully reflected the jittery apprehensions of the midcentury, but, now that an ageing Churchill for 1945 is within measurable distance of not coming true, the play seems also something much smaller and more personally eccentric, though it fits all too well into the RSC's chosen British cultural repository.

Brutally, relentlessly, written, bitter and full a much stronger group of form than most of his disciples, and the opening of *The Churchill Play*, with a panel of human mounted round the desk statements of life supplies a fine shock, into dialogue to the Churchill Camp of twenty years later, with a group of detainees, reflecting an entertainment for a visiting Parliamentary committee. Likewise, when the now-powerless Westminster party do roll up for the performance the solemn congressional group revert to Good Show amateurs who can hardly get through their lines.

Between the shock opening and the bloody Section Four, we get Beckett's version of the new Britain, which sets the tone for many a grim evening I have passed in the theatre over since. Freedom of speech has been quietly shifted. Inconveniences escape have sprung up, torturing with lone small irritants, ship searchers and, perhaps the the military feel like

hunting us. Once made, unpredictable degradation awaits them at the hands of big brass bawlers and sadistic guards. Or so we are told. But if things are as bad as Beckett makes out, the inmates would never have got permission to put on a satiric show, made less to lay the blame on Churchill for everything that has gone wrong since his death.

Berry Kytle's production is well centred and exact in hard-iced military routine and sharp comedy, such as Raymond Woollard's Bill Bunting's re-enactment of the Yalta Conference in a bar built with this production. I hope we have seen an end of prophetic revenge plays by self-styled patriots, whose only message is the spectator's: "You've got it coming to you."

From unaged holocausts to a replay of the real thing in Maria Schneier's *West Royal Coast*, us in Germany of the mid 1930s when they really knew how to run internment camps. The process — and it is a good one — for creating this overwrought shared home is the history of the chosen victims. I know, as a general wiz, that alongside the anti-intellectuals of Jews and CP members, the camps also created homosexuals, Black Africans and other blots on the Aryan landscape. I did not realize that in producing holocausts, the Nazis were simply enforcing an existing German law, one that homosexuals ignored after the war had to keep their mouths shut by fear of renewed repression, nor that they are unable, to this day, to claim their reparation. The last days of the Final Solution that remain to be drunk, and a bitter taste they leave. All honour to Maria Schneier for raising the spectre of these forgotten men, and the complexity of simple society in their day.

I would like to speak with equal admiration of the play it has as points. It is cogently researched, well organised, and self-consciously didactic in its measures of

homosexual stigmatism. It also achieves a theatrical crescendo from an action that describes a downward curve. The opening scene in Max and Rudy's flat could be taking place anywhere, and any time, and when the SS arrive it is as if they were breaking into your own home. On the run for two years, Max and Rudy are picked up again and put on a transport to Dachau where they undergo the usual torture torments, whilst Max survives by staying an order to beat his lover to death.

The action is far as standardized, but at least it is essential. The on-stage play really begins only in the second act, set in the camp, which consists of little more than a dialogue between Max and his new friend Horst, as they shift from one side of the stage to the other, and back again in extreme situations in which virtually nothing is happening. The dialogue is extremely simple when no fight occurs, but what really keeps the piece alive is the recognition by Ian McKellen and Tim Bell that they are playing for two audiences: the playing spectators out front, and the unseen camp guards who keep them under constant surveillance for any signs of shirkers on the job, or physical shirkers for which Horst is finally driven to obstructive banting on the present woe.

None of which compensates for the essentially unconvincing idea of a tender personal relationship blossoming in a German death camp. I know that Dachau 1938 left some of the full horrors of Auschwitz and Buchenwald behind them, it was a mass society successfully organised to spite individual choice and action. The idea that one prisoner could manage to work with a friend and spend days of uninterrupted privacy with the partner of his choice, in one which shows how much has been forgotten of what was once common knowledge about the camp. And when Max, too, has to roll on the mat, there is even a sense of how badly it was he got in Dachau and learned about the fire, otherwise he might have kept on making round interwoven Berlins and waded into whole lots!

In brief, the National Theatre managed to beat the poker face and generate Somers Mangan's *For Britain* Revival with crazy game of Carl Boehm there on Kenneth Branagh's stage. Thanks to some creatively original design, and a playwriting style that carefully evades the necessary didactic, Michael Rudman's production reveals the play as a resolutely brilliant distillation of traditional British virtue, containing refunds that Mangan abandoned the theatre to soon



Robert郁 (Dr. Preston) and Anne Anderson (Miss Archibald) in the National's *For Britain* Revival



## Gassy Comedy LOSERS

BY RICHARD HODGES

From the New York Theatre Company at the Playhouse and Albert Hall, London, opened 7 May 1979. Director: Francis Flanagan. Set Design: John Doman. Sets: John Doman, John Cullin, David Wiles. Lighting: Peter Ransome. Costumes: John Wiles. Stage Manager: Peter Flanagan. Technical: Peter Flanagan.

The success of a series of amateurish productions has by now established the tiny Frogmen Theatre Company as the model of California's rather amateurish amateur theater. Whether it will move on to challenge us, once its visibility is attained, remains to be seen. But the lunatic show clearly till a pup in California.

With its last production, *Father's Day Room*, the troupe moved into the Playhouse, seating over three hundred. Past lunatic shows have used the layer of the large Canberra Theatre. *Losers* the latest lunatic offering did for a week at the Playhouse, then transferred to the

convention Alice Hall as part of the Arts Council sponsored Golden Jubilee programme to celebrate the old hall.

The rather slight play becomes a fairly diverting folly mostly thanks to an excellent performance from John Cullin, backed up by a solid, but slightly portentous interpretation by Thomas Rane of the sweethearts/lovers effected by her mother. John Cullin handles with gusto the confusion from the nostalgic monologues delivered in the audience, reminiscing on the events that made the lovers leave us when St. Peter came, in the flashback scenes. There is a lot of cosy comedy in the early days of clashing groping in a couch, Andy spending snorting lines of Grey's Elegy to reassure the sultry Mum as baby boy comes to cosy snuggles, and there a pointed chapter exploded on the fall as the drunken Andy breaks the news that the old lady's son has been sacked. She looks a saint, but grows a daughter on her feet.

Most of the simple routine comedy could have been exploded with more ingenuity, but

directions of the flashback scenes is very conventional. In resorting to a cliché encounter for Macbeth's "Pray tell to God" speech (an edge and showiness, and with little real to the tragic/absurd).

When I saw the play open in Albert Hall my earlier skepticism had disappeared, particularly on the part of John Cullin, who had to rush over from writing rehearsals at the Playwrights' Conference throughout the season. But the problem of theawkward act had not been solved. Rather than become more obvious as the audience was closer to the stage and had to crane their necks for the spottings on one far side and the distant semi-babbling crowded in between Mum's bed and a precariously placed screen, on the other side of the stage. No attempt at adjusting performance to space had been made.

Yes in transferring to new public service surroundings of Treasury, National Library and the like, Fortune seems to be reaching a new audience in need of searching light at handshakes.

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Peter de Sali (Dick Dodgeon) in the Q Company Theatre Company's *Devil's Disciple*. Photo: Stephen Clark

## Visually crisp and coherent

### THE DEVIL'S DISCIPLE AMERICAN BUFFALO

#### LUCY WARNER

*The Devil's Disciple* by G.B. Shaw. *St* Thomas for the Lyttelton Theatre Company. Director: Duncan Macmillan. Set: Lucy Shaw. Costumes: Helen Weston. Lighting: Duncan Macmillan. Stage Manager: Lucy Clark. Mrs Dodgeon: Sally Potts. Mrs. Price in Sales Office: Sue Cox. Mrs Weston: Barbara Baxley. Mrs. Hackney: Lynn Hanson. Captain: Michael Higgins. Mrs. Elliot: Pauline McLean. General Burgess: Peter Anderson. Mr. Price: John Ward. Mrs. Brewster: Elizabeth Broadbent. Miss Gifford: Sophie Thompson. *Devil's Disciple*

*American Buffalo* by David Mamet. Directed by Duncan Macmillan. Costumes: G. May 1979. Director: Lucy Clark. Design: Anthony Balch. Lighting: Duncan Macmillan. Stage Manager: Barbara Baxley. Mrs. Brewster: Elizabeth Broadbent. Miss Gifford: Sophie Thompson. *American Buffalo*

Shaw writes *The Devil's Disciple* in the style of a "good Adelphi melodrama", which he defined as "scenic and intense drama of action and feeling". Although technically he has kept within his own structure, the subject matter of the play is far more complex and the morals more subtle than the style would originally imply — in such the form and content are character at odds with each other and force the director into a choice of alternatives.

Duncan Macmillan has gone for few key melodramas in her presentation, with fairly broad stereotypes in the minor roles and a more naturalistic approach to the principal characters. Helen Potts' brief appearance as Mrs Dodgeon much briefly and vacuously the point of the old lady's christ, and therefore heartless.

Perhaps this had something to do with the remarkably poor and invisible looking galloons of Arthur Deeks' set. Just apart from this the

"position", and Bill Conn as her younger son Christy was able to play the part to the full. But although Shaw's message is less clear in the writing of *The Devil's Disciple* than in most of his major works, it was not entirely helped by the Q's production.

In the New Hampshire of 1777, the time of the American War of Independence, Shaw sets up the level Dick Dodgeon, supervisor of a peasant family against two kinds of formal authority, that of religion when adherence to a strict code has replaced living with cold day, and that of social behaviour where courteous manner conceals callous behaviour. The religious a puritanism and the unorthodox English

In the midst of the colonial uprising, Dick unexpectedly abducts the son of his leader who has been hanged for his rebellion as an example by the English. While trying to suddenly to make the peasant wife, Judith, Dick is recruited for Anderson by English soldiers, and comes off to be hung as further example. Judith falls in love with his heroism, and finally breaks his orders not to reveal her identity so as to save her husband. She cannot contain herself during Dodgeon's trial, during which he is praised agains General Burgess, or "Gentleman Johnny" of the irreverent masses.

Sue Cox plays the Mrs Anderson, who turns older and saves the day, with great maturity which is sometimes rather at odds with Mary Lou Stevens' Judith. She gives the melodramatic role appropriately broad strokes and wide-eyed belief in the romantic interaction with which the audience has been imbued finally, and Deeks.

It is in the first scene with Judith that Peter de Sali's Dick Dodgeon first showed signs of the weaknesses that later somewhat upset the balance of the play. As with all Shawian heroes, Dodgeon is not only interesting in his wit, humour and charm, but also as his intellectual enough and amiable, in fact had all of. In few these, but seemed almost too much on these and the melodramatic aspects, as per fall into the apolitical side. Thus when he comes up against Tim Elliot's delightfully sharp portrayal of Burgess, the superficial politeness that leads Burgess, for instance, to recommend death by hanging rather than the long stand given the unorthodox and of the English soldiers, seemed to less sound than the repartee of Dodgeon, who appeared only to be playing the General at his own game. The grotty was carried right through to the galloons where the love of dying that Dodgeon's experience, faded to zero.

Perhaps this had something to do with the remarkably poor and invisible looking galloons of Arthur Deeks' set. Just apart from this the

incredible interlocking shells that made up the different locations, gave an excellent impression of the small, hard-hewn American township. Visually the production was crisp and coherent, with the set giving a feeling to the Drama Theatre stage, and the director having had the answer with a sure eye for tableau.

The Q's production of *The Devil's Disciple* made an entertaining evening, it was presented with competence and flair, if missing out a little on the essential spirit of what is anyway one of Shaw's more difficult plays. The National Theatre in England produced it as their contribution to America's bicentenary, for which it made a nice point, but Shaw's plays, like Shakespeare's, go in and out of fashion with current social and political interests, and *The Devil's Disciple*, beyond the general colonial period, doesn't seem to have a lot to say to an Australian audience at present.

The same could probably be said of David Mamet's *American Buffalo*, playing at Her Majesty's downstage. Peter Hall's production seemed a total revolution of a script which has had to be rethought if had in mind with the new generation, in presenting Chicago law like Mamet's main strength would appear to be his accuracy in reproducing colloquial speech, a skill which pulls over a period of over forty years, particularly when the actors are unable to sustain the necessary accent, and the subject matter of the dialogue has little extreme content.

The failure of these party come to work up the message to send a clear political which includes a valuable American Buffalo is not enough to hold interest for a full length play, particularly outside an very specific cultural references.

## Creating the atmospheres

### THE MIRACLE WORKER UNDER MILK WOOD

#### BRUCE BRAFFET

*The Miracle Worker* by William Gibson and Louis Untermeyer. Director: Bruce Braffet. Stage Manager: Lucy Hayes. Costumes: Helen McGeough. Lighting: Rob Morris. Setting: Bill Linton. Book: Jennifer McGeough. Music: Eddie McGeough. Leads: Jennifer Peter, Helen Braley, Lucy Hayes, Marlene Johnson, David Braley. *Under Milk Wood*

Ron McGregor, the HVTC's second Artistic Director has resigned. In his short time at the helm he has directed one play in the tiny Civic Theatre (The Club) and has launched the company's new Playhouse Theatre with three shows. It is safe to say I think that all four have

been popular success. *One, Colour becomes a* deserved sell-out, and is booked for a return season.

The Playhouse audience is compact, the acting area fixed and small. It is as high on the back wall two small sets with curved out, and between them on the floor in a tight semi-circular seating area. Painted by the using. Each time McGregor has used the Playhouse — a large and varied, a variety of situations, and a come pace — he has brought it to distinctive life.

The two plays (*The Mouth Wider and* *Daile Athlone*) were designed to run in weekly repertory and offered a companion context. For the winter with a hint of spring, story of the blood on Helen Keller all was black and white with grey between, and the very played itself out across the full grey horizon. For Dylan Thomas' *Liberator* some masking here and there had brightly coloured actors grouped on curtains in front of a generous yield the imagery of the drama town, and flooded by the Narrator as high his tone of the pure world of the Mind remained, all was green pink, brown, yellow, violet.

From McGregor's sources, this drama has as much as anything been his ability to create the atmosphere wherein his play can thrive.

The *Mouth Wider* is really the *Aidan Bell* story, and Louise Bush gave her a quite strong, perceptive. The two regular teacher moved through age and attacks with such steady Irish resilience that we were with her

all the way. McGregor's daughter Kirsty was Helen Keller and she did her proud also on the role for Louise Bush perfectly. She resembled immensely like a patient before, making her teacher wiser for down, each her own evolved silence and learning.

The play is less than kind to the color players, they provide little more than family background to set the main conflict going, and later even pampers to it. Jennifer McGregor made of Helen's mother, perhaps the most significant exception to that. Her poised nature often gave an air of commanding viewing point of the play's unashamedly even naturalness.

Daile Athlone on the other hand presented the action in a happy land, alternately in relaxed repose and playful action. They were charming pastes through Dylan Thomas' Welsh town. Each member of the ensemble gave account of their own special pleasure in they balanced roles between them like children. All was on the floor diverse special mention Jennifer McGregor, Linda Creary, Valerie Baker, Lucy Hayes, Peter Fahey, Mark Johnson and Glenn Howett. In case of corporate trouble they showed off in a comfortable town. David Hughes and Louise Bush survived well, though it was principally the group and the blackboards that opened Dylan Thomas' words to us with such pleasing warmth and colour.

Ross McGregor has not served at Newcastle long, but when he has done no stage at least has made the MTC in the Playhouse look a strong, durable and successful company.

Continued from page 50  
characters. This was where *The Sleep in the Stock* scored. It was one of the few plays in the festival, as Peter Williams said, at which success and peace were well handled. And when people spoke from offstage, they sounded like they were in another room, rather than just being behind the end of the curtain.

Comments and suggestions are requested for an "Author's Thread" section in *Theatre Australia* (Please address all correspondence to "Author's Thread" Editorial Office, P.O. Box 10, Mayfield, N.S.W. 2304.) Reviews of single plays are probably of little interest except to the group concerned. Would you like more review of festivals or regional theater plays suggestions — or — what?

Ron Langworth is the theater critic of the *Newcastle Morning Herald*.

Continued from page 4

production

A key scene involves the first QANTAS flight from Longreach on November 2, 1922. The first passenger, Arthur Kennedy had a family inside the tiny overboard — it had taken his eight months. The flight took one hour. It is an excellent example of how aviation can shorten the intercolossal distances of the Queensland outback."

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Chapter 11

## Folk songs clarify female dilemmas

#### CROSSFIRE

11 of 11

Any theatre group, music director or music who attempt to perform, in stage or screen, during Christmas, Christmas Week, January and February, International Women's Year and especially entitled, *An After Dark* simultaneously have themselves open to being labelled — *negligent*, *incompetent*, *unprepared* or *unconcerned* male chauvinist pigs — by those with extreme solutions.

Paradoxically, *Divine Thirteen* Group's production avoids most of the older pitfalls and actually succeeds in presenting clearly and concisely, the female differences with which most women caught in the crucible of 1918 or 1919 have to come to terms. This success is due in no small measure to the sensitive and sensible interpretation by director Robert Kimber. In the light of his understanding of *Divine* performances and audiences, who prefer their choices to be clearly

and representation. He has used this as a  
discrete license for the stories he has written  
with Jennifer Carpenter's occasionally  
antagonistic and inherently brittle about  
"Crisis-Blistered Women."

Design-wise the longingly restored *marionette house* is now rechristened in a Sydney warehouse where hand-painted sets and prop furnishings clearly illustrate the interrelationships and dual roles of the characters who cross-cross time and space as they are participated in the three-quarter round playing area (downstage). The backdrop is a large graphic blackboard upon which the dust swirls up (dust and counter-diagram related to the human movement since 1910). It is this setting which first greets the audience who immediately have a sense of relevance from which to ponder the alternatives. But the masterpiece of the interpretation is the inclusion of ten folk songs such as "What Do Women Talk About", "Winter of Your Life" and "Can't You Trust Me?" which poignantly clarify the ambiguities of the original script. Lesser English hammarists and purists, the present, would be moved.

However, there is an inherent danger in this following music route, which was evident by the use of "cover" on opening night. With the appeal of her deep, rich numbered singing voice, Sarah Williams may well distract the San Dieños of the audience from concentrating upon the realizations they are meant to be drawn around how women like their wife

Others, who are financially secure yet stressed, are stressed in both a career and children but are caught in the middle strangled by those of vulgar wealth and reflectors of conflicting ideas.

Ruth Twarder's portrait of Celia Osmond suggests well from the superficially committed feminist in the national agony of achieving her life less able to tell pregnant. With her in the final pose of a "liberated woman" the three older women act as a complement and contrast. Her 15 HI counterpart is Jane Osmond whose life revolves around completing a manuscript which the 1979 Jane tries to abort. Although Joedy Brown looks right for the unashamedly erotic role of Jane she is more at home in her position as Jane's maid, the recently fallen pregnant Rose, a delightfully dimwitted by Kathleen Cleaver. But it remains for her modern counterpart, Miss Blackwell, who is pregnant by choice, to demonstrate, as Eva Buckley does so convincingly, that she has mastered her domestic and her sexual identities.

The man in the case above through sheer dead reckoning there, may have got it all together. Tom Peacock is particularly appealing as his homosexual relationship with Mike, and Kevin Spacey already commands the screen and *Law* with the seriousness *True*.

Successful though this interpretation and mapping undoubtedly a nice disease remains. Why devote so much time and energy to enhancing and clarifying a scope that has limited *functionality*?

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1



For Discussion and More Ideas on TBI's, Please Join

## Showmanship and intellectual resilience HAPPY END

#### ПОДДЕРЖКА

Playboy and has wandered on for half century well. Although not representative of all that is great in Brecht, a play well cut out most of his professorial jargon, being at all more "popular", never acceptable to being passed off as their entertainment. It is doubtful whether this musical was ever intended to have the political gets of the later plays and it certainly lacks the metaphorical consistency of *The Threepenny Opera* which influenced it so much a year earlier though Brecht and Eisler to use their bases in the same year.

Ultimately however, it will be the quality of production itself that is measured by John Wilson and his long, new TR Company that will determine the future of the *Second Avenue*. John's approach is bold and committed, he goes all out for the theatrical elements needed to make the show "work", but never compromise as head of an organization and money. The plot, for what it's worth, measures the fate of Hollywood.

East, leaving light of the Texas Belly Army, which is to submit unresistably to the charms of Bob Cratchit, persecuted member of a crookery gang of hoodlums. An alliance is formed between pure and simple, and the two are to rule a bank, which, we are assured, is an absolute certainty. This is the plot.

The name of Henry haunts, too, in the books of the TP. Chapter 10 shows the action and dialogue crackles with a tough, hard-edged brilliance — a quality reflected in Mike Redfog's superb art of black lacquer and red gold. More than any other British-Western novelist however, Henry Ford can be fully dismissed, indeed, the story line is little more than a vehicle for some of the most pernicious things British and West wrote, most of them recalling the strange fascination it had for the English-speaking mythology of the American west. Milner's experiment in satire pays off in getting the most out of every satiric device and device alike. Mary Hart, despite a lame beginning as an unscrupulous West singer, with the right sense of modish hardness, amounts without sentimentality. Her handling of the basically benevolent, but supposedly tough "Savvyboy Anthony" is masterly. Henry Hart and Geoff Carrington, two young actors of good presence, lead the gang in an impressively wilful delivery of the taunting "Rubb Song." In fact, throughout, South's Chapter and Carrington's (De Masi's) are perfectly matched, the one stark and laconic, the other sleek and explosive, a long way off from Peter Loon.

It is the careful combination of energy and precision that makes Happy End one of the most engaging pieces of theater I have witnessed in a long time. It is there in the choreography, in the singing and in the combination of showmanship

and intellectual residence that seems to be John Milton's *parva domus*. A moss has been struck in the woods of Bowes Hill that should reward for a long time to come.

## Great Theatre

卷之三

**COLLECTIVE PLENTY IN EGYPT**  
Reviewed for *PLA* by Barbara Wilson. The  
Congress of the International Forum, Berlin, 1974. German.  
Not translated.  
Reviewed by David Park.  
Reviewed.

He sits cross-legged on a strawed mat, surrounded by flower beds. In his right hand there is — wait for it — a wasp for it — nothing. In his left hand a goli of skipping-pole. He describes both these "fun funny", he says, and opens a fist. Nothing. "I'm not funny", he says, and opens the other fist.

The light never clearly goes out over "My  
brother, not you" in spite of the decision  
soft yet rough. He holds death and goes, piled  
upiling as he usage them from our hand as the  
other. *Deadly* is weakness the depicted  
handful. Is it a bitter quantity? Yes. *Deadly*  
"That is yours," he concludes, and Tony  
knows it is.

Housemate William Hancock is living his last 30 minutes in a flat in Sydney and suffering as a chronic memory of his life, occasionally flushing the wet and wrinkled of his great days, sitting at Long John Silver under full sail, then burying himself under a grandfather's blanket with his violin bottle. He perks from the blanket as a personal message from the skies as a wonderful comic sequence and then reads a press cutting from London, chronicling his recent show. He is an reject from the world, driven to the ends of the earth "Australia". He opens a Sydney newspaper "Mother of pearl exhibits collection of Lomondian books. Oh yes, it's all happening here".

From O'Neill's performance and Rock Bellings' forceful direction make this the most enthralling and moving presentation for a long time. Tim Hancock makes an over with laughter, and then tells an equally funny joke which twists the heart in dead silence. And it makes another fine effort for the TN Company, whose Underground Theatre is the most exciting theatrical venture since La Boite opened. Why is it that in spite of all the money invested in new theatres one can take a bare room with modest form and the lights and sound cues whereby the recorder to the next one beside us, and get on great theatre that has as honesty which those great mansions lack?



Michael Sherry as Bottom and Linda Wilkinson as Titania, in the State Theatre Company's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

## ARMS AND THE MAN

CATHRIE WOMER

*Arms and the Man* by Bernard Shaw. State Theatre Company. Artistic Director: Michael Sherry. Director: Michael Sherry. Lighting: Michael Lewis. Set & Costume: Michael Cuthbert. Stage Manager: Linda Wilkinson. Company: Michael Sherry, Greg Lake, Chris McShane, Ciaran MacAuliffe, Michael Doherty, Gregor MacNamee, Michael Keane, Linda Wilkinson, Michael O'Farrell, Linda Wilkinson, Greg Lake, Michael O'Farrell, Michael Sherry.

This is a play about chocolate and "sweeties". Shaw took some pains to point the not so sweet truth to early 20th century critics and audiences. It is about self fulfillment not self indulgence.

The reason is that the production was granted requests that twentieth century theater goers now that Shaw's prime realistic as well as his romantic qualities, mainly a pre-possessing wit, and the presentation's attempts to start and end the play and not concern did little to persuade the audience of this. "Weren't it fun...?" you could almost say of it, was the conclusion at the end. (The German's old song called *The Chocolate Soldier*.)

The "fun" of *fun* was entirely within the framework of the Shawian situation. In contrast to his Unpleasant works which were supposed to make audiences distinctly uncomfortable while they were being entertained, the Pleasant plays were constructed to elicit pleasure from with-

in themselves and cause them with the audience, so that they could feel sympathetic to one and supportive of the other, a simple shift from showing effects to suggesting causes. My guess is that the sort of sympathy that Shaw had in mind was as "harmless comedy" in the classical which he hoped to undermine. "Harmless" is a much better term to add. It was not only my guess either. The books can tell me made a point of writing a note to himself which began "The unification in response of the morally

beautiful and ugly and cause them with the audience, so that they could feel sympathetic to one and supportive of the other, a simple shift from showing effects to suggesting causes. My guess is that the sort of sympathy that Shaw had in mind was as "harmless comedy" in the classical which he hoped to undermine. "Harmless" is a much better term to add. It was not only my guess either. The books can tell me made a point of writing a note to himself which began "The unification in response of the morally

beautiful and ugly

beautiful. Once the audience's taste and then let them and believe they get a chosen to-wards, go back to the successful formula. The type of plays to mount? A good Shaw,  *Arms and the Man*? Remember the necessity of small casts and don't do unnecessary costume shows. They can be expensive and no change of you keep doing them. Keep your cast numbers down if you can.

Then there's the chance of a poor performance. Sound advice still. At the same time it was thought that Shaw was a good preparation for Shakespeare. What is this then, a reversal? Had that young director taken the advice, he might have mounted the play with the same kind of enthusiasm and earnestness which Hugh Keay brings to the production? It is a miraculously frank reversal. Robert Flaherty's level-headed almost detached *Blithe Spirit*. He organizes the round dance, the walk of argument, so that it is an production like the broken and Potocki borders which frame and flavor every leading edge of Hugh Colonna's exuberantly dressed stage. The difference in approach might have been that twenty years ago the formal elements would have been stronger and more obvious and that earlier quality which Keay could have added to Shaw's work would have been more in evidence. The Potocki, Keay and Flaherty would have advanced a stronger claim for personal preparation at the expense of certain areas of art and philosophy. The whole thing would have been closer to their hearts and a person Shaw would have approved. In the production some of his hosts has been nicely paired and breath-takingly.

The performances are uniformly good and consistent with the production concept and style. Michael Sherry, suffering perhaps from a touch of the *Familiars*, has overacted *Armless*, the soldier anti-hero, in the past when his emotions are too easily identified in postures. Nevertheless he cuts a fine figure. Linda Wilkinson's *Titania* makes up for her motherly model and spent what the character lacks in intelligence, and Bowering responds to that character with sufficient enthusiasm to make a certain march. Robert Gribot's energetic *Colonel Ovalle* is a first rate creation — though rather more controlled than much be his first scene with Chen. McNamee's determined *Lavinia* in which measures of service, audacity and ambition, silence and militancy are used to manage the heat in the play. They work well together. So do Leslie Dwyer and Dayne Garry, the almost historical *Patriots*. Indeed it is in Dayne Garry's performance of *Catherine* that the old tradition, now civilization ditched, is at its clearest and most amusing.

HUNGO

第十一章

Truly undoubtedly but the front, one  
consists of vicious, despoiled acting and  
directing as Aristotle has in every nose of the  
word a professional company. It is a  
disappointing, therefore, to see them making less  
than an inferior measure of *Anglo-Boat's* play,  
an incorporation of the final days of western  
civilization's greatest poet than half dying in  
circumstances of the most pitiful and  
harmful impulse, depends on the sharpest clarity  
and cruelty in the execution. There is no excuse  
for a missed beat - a false gesture or inflection.  
It is painful to see the actors failing into types,  
which weaken their grasp of the text, their  
playing against each other, and abominably their  
connection with the audience.

Consequently, the blank spaces of the Steel are visually effective. The cold white walls and fireplaces are ideal for a play of the sun, the simple groups assist continuity and stark lights are a credit to those involved in their design and management. There is the guarantee for a congenial atmosphere. But, except for a few scenes, it is, at the moment, unused — largely, I suspect, although it is definitely designed by the designer David Adjaye.

What is the atmosphere of the play? Its events concern the land changes in Jacobean rural England, events at which Shakespeare, as a landowner and gentleman, was historically interested. On the land at issue there are marked by a poor vagrant who has been, an old man then, dispossessed of land to such other old friends and family members. Bond's attitude in the play approaches lucidity. He ends on the closing note "Nothing", and a classical note of Shakespeare's repeated "Nothing" in *Love's Labour's Lost*.

'We should be aware of a terrible openness and strained violence that could make us sleep with fear, except that we are partly in it. Men are bound and, like the Virgin herself, we carry it. Our overwhelming consciousness through it must also be the threat this poem is to our contemporary cultural icon of Shakespeare as fluid, sexual and joyful. Here he is a shabby bourgeois, a pessimistic Prospero trying to save his master's court of real people who usually get out of his

Where an spot can see the production as that that  
nothing already exists. (David Allen's direction, in  
its best, has a measured sense of timeliness, that  
the players may catch in the production gene-  
rally goes by fast. But it is this conflicting  
between what is there and what is not there  
that makes the play work.)

more use of the new technology.

It is fatal at the moment that they do not adopt their voices and movements either in Allen's own poly-Midlands rhythms or to the real physical space in which they are performed.

The next difficulty Keat's Gadzooks shows, is Shakespeare, has the opportunity to thread his line like a knife into the audience, and he does this in these moments with unipower power and control. Henry Bolker's red and rocklike portrait of his father is forced to recede in the sheer attractiveness of the character's down and out. Yet his father gives him an auto deformed violence which is chilling and despair. Pauline Carter as the old woman and Ben Hinton as her father both give superb and moving performances.

These four states share an awareness of human pain, which they communicate to each other and to the audience. But Geoff Keen, David Kirk, Gwendolyn Hechtson and Tom Addis/Barrie are developing all sorts of idiomas. David Kirk in *Crucible* is required to deliver all his lines in a high Birmingham whine, which, however, could be argued that the direction is

trying to make, is a gross mistake in performance. Countries do not have the right to frighteningly convincing in the way General and Major and Romano Prodi are convincing. Romano Prodi knows very well the power and the coherence of law, and he is not doing well by a performance which relies on the use of threats of sanctions.

Price Dunn and Wendy Madson have observed considerable resilience by their other constituents and techniques, such as continuing neighborhood group studies of the forces, ranged, fear and rage of the oppressed. The activists need to remind themselves that much can be achieved by witness, witness and witness. And David Allen might be well advised to tell them to take another look at the *resilience* of the people.

The production is still early and no run has begun so it is a serious guess of Daimler that the critic is forced to deal with it seriously, rather than dismiss point-factual configurations which encourage no thought or change.

See it. Think about it. Because in countries where all the fascists, shoggs or downright scum and reactionary groups have, Troops offers the best hope for honest and effective theatre in this country.



Family Caregivers in the Child Abuse and Neglect Outcomes in Florida: A Descriptive Report



Robyn Archer as Dorothy Washington in *A Star Is Torn*. Photo: David Parker

## Frequently edging on brilliance

### A STAR IS TORN

RAYMOND STANLEY

A Star Is Torn directed by Robert Atkins, music Robert Fisher, Music: C. Corbin & Associates, Original Musical Direction: Paul J. Hart, and Costumes: Robert Ross at Universal Theatre, 148 Swanston Street, Melbourne. Robert Fisher Director: John Isaacs, Lighting: John Lewis, Music arranged and played by Peter Read, Robert Gross & Paul Hart. Cast: Robyn Archer as Dorothy Washington, Robyn Isaacs, Mary Meek, Sean South, Peter Morgan, John Chard, Brian Murphy, Linda Fal, Ann Francis, Michael Parker, Paul Davis, Dorothy Washington, Jeanne Louise, Christopher

The trouble with reviewing a show of this nature on its opening performance is that you obviously are going to be biased, inspired upon and appear somewhat different to later audiences. As an example, prior to our recent review, John Ramsay's and Sean Lawren's show *The Wizard From The Bush* would have reflected changes in performance content and approach since that first performance Melbourne critics saw.

As soon as the first night in Melbourne the multi-talented Robyn Archer presented to the audience eleven women (not ten as she mentioned early in the evening, in most cases giving varying renditions of them from her

rendering songs) they allegedly were associated with. With the exception of Jane Fonda all are now dead and look pretty hectic, stormy lives, most dying in untimely ends.

Early in the evening Archer says: "The ten women had between them about thirty husbands, two never married, two were raped, they used to be bachelors."

In its opening criticism of presentation of the ladies, a programme note reads: "These are not personifications, they are representations of moderately failed women whose songs and lives caught the public imagination of their times and have continued to shape and alter style and consciousness until the twentieth century."

So when actually happens is that sometimes Archer manages to look with the change of hairstyle and slight clothing adjustments obviously like the woman she is portraying, sometimes succeeds in catching their visual characteristics, and at other times it is off the mark in both instances.

In the very beginning the costumes on stage are maps three numbers in herself: "Can't Help Loving That Man", "The Man Who Got Away" and "My Man". The first two are associated with Helen Morgan and Judy Garland, both featured on the show the third with the unaffected Patti Page and Marlene Dietrich. Two of the latter dropped from the programme?

Archer then goes into an amazingly lifelike impersonation of Bessie Smith, somehow managing to pull herself out and sit around like a somebody from the same time fifteen or much earlier in her singer's life and singing many of her songs (although not "Oh Daddy" more appropriate to Edith Piaf?).

Next, choosing the mappings for the somewhat basic, Archer jumps onto one of the two pianos and sings "Someone To Watch Over Me" (Curtis LeMay of course!) But no — it is supposed to be Helen Morgan! One would like to know what prompts Archer to associate this singer, which was almost Gorda's signature tune with the first Julie in *Shirley* who certainly never recorded it. The Morgan sequence is one of the best, standing in the show. Archer seems unable to support her impersonations, and the challenge is to make one a pleasant witness or not a hindrance intended.

Thus comes Judy Garland, still with leg hair few and impulsive. Robyn Archer at the opening stage of Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz* was not being a drag about Garland because frequently throughout the evening Archer returns to Garland at various stages of her life becoming less and less like her and never recovering visually. It is through through Garland that she is able to project a few new

adultly numbers, as related to other angelic songs.

As the evening proceeds we see and learn about Billie Holiday (whom Archer occasionally manages to catch visually), Eartha Kitt in look and sound alike, but marred by the tree way her story is put on), Jane Fonda in other word impersonations, Patti Page (open and sweetly off), Marlene Dietrich (nothing like), and the others: Bette Davis, Diana Washington (open and consciously like) and Anna新的 who, if the amount of time devoted to her is any guide, must be Archer's favorite.

Starting the second half is the complete visual fail (as Marlene Dietrich, great fun as presented by Archer, but I thought more like Lily Munster than "Ooh, Mew"). Dorothy is sparse in the show on Marlene Dietrich and Archer only sings one of her numbers (poor): "It's A Bit Of A Rain That Cromwell Knocked About A Bit". Although it was Marlene Dietrich's most famous number, as far as I know she never recorded it (although Marlene Dietrich herself, listening to Marlene Dietrich's records one feels a much warmer and needier voice than Archer provides). But, to me it sounds more like Lily Munster.

The last numbers of the show I fail to understand as Archer being herself, not a potpourri of all the singers or what? It can actually be deleted.

Archer is on stage exactly one hour in each half of the show (booked by two five periods), in contrast that it all seems much longer. It is no unusual, various performances she presents. Frequently edging on brilliance, and should be more focused on her. In the first time I have seen Robyn Archer perform, and certainly hope it is far from being the last. In my opinion she has attempted to encompass too many characters in this show and if she concentrated upon five or six possibly could convey more and one would be moved by the content, which is certainly not the case.

I believe everyone would be impressed again. Sitting right in front of me was Ray Livermore's director Peter Barry, and the thought constantly went through my mind how much more stimulating Barry would have made it.

The conventional management, combined in presenting Robyn Archer in the show are to be congratulated. I undoubtedly will receive much notice, acclaim and one hopes will do equally well at the box office.

This show also makes the first really professional presentation at the Universal Theatre and hopefully will put it on the map. The theatre is not without its problems, but it should be possible to sort these out.





L to R: Maurice Fields (left) and Warren Linton (right) in the Melbourne Theatre Company production of *The Club*. Photo: David Taylor.

## Emphasises narrative, melodrama

### THE CLUB

GABRIEL BURTT HINSON

*The Club* by David Williamson 1982 at the Forum Street Theatre, Melbourne, 16 April to 21 May 1989. Director: Warren Linton. Design: Roger Sturz. Lighting: John P. Gadsden. Costumes: Marion Keay. Layout: John Hinwood. Stage Manager: Lucy May. Music: Maurice Fields. Sound: Gordon Whittaker. Production: Melbourne Theatre Company.

It's not exactly one show more than once after opening night that disappears from their box office calendar (and consciousness) and dredged up for comparison of worse and lesser days. But as the people who are a production's loyal press, they'll keep you doffs of toes with their dollars to view Miss Piggy or Rock 'n' Roll (or *One True Good Taste*) or *Gasoline Alley* or *John Wayne*. They'll turn up week after week to the same play. They enjoyed it once, so they'll bring another performance every year, since they are the ones who can tell a story of the predictability of dropping off, or how that one compares with the Sydney one, and so on. Fans know. Unless, that is, in last year's Melbourne, there were only as many fans as there were critics. This is the parlous state "popular" theatre is in. It's tragic.

But there are exceptions. Williamson's *The Club* is one. That shrewd marketing man in the head of the MTC has discerned that his audience is not just the know-it-all pretenders who are against. Certainly it was under-exploited in Melbourne in its first production, and certainly there was evidence that even apart from its subject matter it was accepted with sufficient enthusiasm to pack another night in a theatre not amazingly. So I went to see it again.

The first time I saw it I was as impressed with its narrative momentum as I was with the retelling of plots, stories and pretensions that anyone interested in football would know. But these plots were some of the things going for it in Melbourne. The relationship between real

Coaches, Presidents and the ones in the play was evident, nuanced, mostly and friendly enough to get away with. In Melbourne it is a local play, the sort of thing the MTC should have been doing regularly for years (and have — note all that on).

I've got to see how a New Yorker or someone from Sydney would approach it, whether they would find any resonance in it at all. I do it in from Melbourne. So the play goes easily and works to keep the narrative flowing, and at certain (in some program confusions) the moment when the President leaves played a game in his MTC with the Coach he'd never missed a game and could describe the Coaches from back then in our knowledge of each's unpredictable feelings.

Second time around these localised resonances, the realising of just Melbourne's love of its smaller sports, and the emphasis of the play was less important back in the play and in the production.

Taking the play first. On a personal note I wish small Williamson plays an earnest Melbourne taking the side around the traps looking for insurance, from football feverish scribbles and articles. It was much debated at the time (some actors said they would have wanted to do with it) whether it wasn't too or at least wasn't true enough. Other writers thought they were to be satisfied and only Grant Australian Football Play (The Last G.A.F.P.) And were motivated by making more than anything else that it would be a flop and they wouldn't have anything to do with one of these. So much for that judgment! A high-powered lengthily (overly) organised in the basement of the legendary Grace Darling Hotel where the Collingwood Football Club was founded, in that Williamson might have access on the Best Staff, Governor Leatherhead, Old Gold Maid and Blood Sweated, Trial and True Section. I will however for as long as Collins is syncretic with gold, best and great football the night of *Dave and Captain Blood*. And, *Dark Days* (weakened

years over a glass or two of M3 Pernod). But I do.

I mention this, because *The Club* is and was regarded as important in Melbourne. Now, however, the Gang of Old Wives has departed the social landscape, and the play is resurrected. Turned by Sydney and New York, and *Washington* is now like a well-oiled train. And like a cog in a game you've been at, it's a bit predictable. Not in the simple sense of knowing the story, but in the sense that the things in the play that unpreceded the narrative (Honey for the suddenly like character, and clashes of values have disappeared. I still think that they were there when I first saw *The Club*. Where have they gone?

Finally, I think this feeling is a function of having seen it before. The responses have been diluted, the analysis made, the emotion sorted through. The second time around adds nothing to take something away, freshness, newness, surprise. Which is why a play should go once and think hard, rather than go twice to make sure.

Secondly, the production itself is tired seemingly before the first week had played. For some reason Steven Chilvers has decided it to emphasise the narrative, the melodrama moments and a singleness of character. I do not mean that the characters are one-dimensional so much as isolated. They did not seem to have been allowed to grow, so the actors to act. I mean that there are a few difficulties in the actor's style. Take Maurice Fields, as estimable, straight ahead, locanda, overbearing near-odd to make hell more than the inmates. However, and put that with Peter Carnegie as estimable, lateral, clever, interesting, witty, and poised going to have problems. Working against either, but as a play where the story line and simple characterisations are emphasised, subtlety will not go to value. Which is what happens to Carnegie and John Heywood, the President and Coach respectively.

This is not the of a play because without there being some playing capacity between the manipulators and the manipulated, the play loses balance and becomes the usually funny story of a bit of small time bureaucratic game playing. A superbly oily performance from Marion Keay doesn't help. Her Administration adds to the inbalance, through no fault of the

For me the ultimate let down was the series towards the end of the play when the Coach has finally gathered his team to his fold and in an attempt to prevent the Australian's plan to get rid of him and replace him with a going to win a few games. Hard as such a winning coach. Hard instead of them being a bit of about even more about the prospect of winning a few games, even going into the Finals we have the Coach revving the Racers and the Captain up. They say that before it but they do it if they think the play is a comedy. You can read this as a message about what happens to a production of a play when somebody's given the appointment of a job.



Liu R, Jennifer Chase (University of Toledo), Elizabeth Alexander (Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute) and David Danner (University of Illinois) on the influence of linear Compton production of Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> and the film

Sharply satirical  
farce in comic opera  
style

## ARM AND THE MAN

现代汉语词典

and the like to George Russell from Michael  
Brown Country Physician, Boston, Massachusetts, October  
18, 1818. D. C. Lester, Boston, Mass.

Steve Parker: <http://www.sjg.org.uk> (Authorised by Steve Parker)

*Arms and the Man* is one of George Bernard Shaw's earliest plays — it was written and first staged in 1894 and at the time received positive notices, although it was not until the 1903 production of *Man and Superman* by Barker and Vandeleur that Shaw's influence on the theater and audiences was more immediately felt by critics.

*Arm And The Man* is set in the 1883 Belgian Congo war in the Belgian Congo and is the denunciation of the glory of war and the horrors of fighting soldiers. However it approach the play as merely being about men and war, image and reality, violence, the changing couplings of the sexes in the play to the notion of a discontented wife plot whereas there is a single orientation in the play to lead it as a tortured without attack on Romanticism as a fiction and violent harsh human relationships and attitudes to man and women.

The approach brings into sharper and more important focus Shaw's view on women as well as men. The plot has elements of a *Class For Taste* test of sincerity and fidelity of affection, but it is more open handed in that it reveals the ambivalence of men and women. Shaw's values against Romanticism are strengthened by his linking it with the values and means of the young bourgeoisie. As Bentley was to show later in *Midsummer* the working people cannot afford to live in Romantic style. Shaw writes:

colonial, which is only a flattening down of resistance in politics and society, is no substitute to one's resistance in culture or religion. We might well have added here, reference to her line of resistance to colonial domination.

The tone of the poem is at the opening more when Anna Fokk, the imperious and powerfully tried daughter of a major in the Bulgarian army declines at high pitched shrill shriek hyperbolically that her abdication of the honors of her sister Queen *Sofia*, derives from Pushkin, Byron and the *Beloved Queen*. The absurd and foolish formula of *Sofia*'s losing a model or every charge which happened in with equalized success in *Willy* described by Bleekrode, the German soldier and proletarian name, as the nature of "an operatic major".

Derwin Ray Lewis took his cue from these writers and shaped the play in a vigorous comic opera style. By playing in the left the absurdities of the plot and the exaggerated character types, he created a highly enchanting focus which did made of the salient points. Shaw intended wisdom over humour; production of Julian Lewis's strengths as a director has caused in the case of theatrical comedy and he has called some fine comic performances from actors who when cast in more serious roles are less interested.

David Dawson brought some Indian flowers to the role of *Bessie* but on first entrance, he was in study as *Isabella's* husband — looking very, as ever elsewhere but clipped moreover and brilliantly white teeth — and a parapluie of languidly disengaged gestures seem him review his clever longer gone by. Long past was sheer delight. At *Rome*, Elizabeth Alexander began in such a high register that it was difficult to imagine where she could take the part; however she consumed the vegetal bodies and made convincing Romeo's transformation into *Juliet's* lover only — the tough minded women who could get exactly what she wanted as nice as the柔軟的 it was she needed.

Russell's parents, the Major and Miss Pythias, are the least interesting characters, being the

venues for Shaw's plays at the Belgian/Bavarian resort hotel, but as the mother Jeanne Clary brought out the full tragedy and importance of the role Edward Higgins was at ease in the writing. Suppose like some role of the amateur version Macbeth. But it was Claude Barré in Léonie the newest girl on the make and John Steiner as illustrious the 'romantic novelist in profile' who presided in the early hard-acted performances that kept the production sharply averted when it showed tendencies of becoming really cerebral.

Anne Fetter's set design was as sleekly as it was logically stated and characterized from the comic director. Separate entries of antagonist at first for theater resources managing to make their marks but hardly constitutes a creative input into a serious theater production. Ironically the set exemplified the very thing Marin was criticizing — cholesterol box nation, it was a vision of the infinitesimal falacy and not like enough to be born.

Continued from page 10

ships an International Piano Competition and a scholarship for strings, in 1977. The PICA Congress in Sydney awarded them for \$14,000, they sponsored the Young Theatre Company of Sydney, the 1978 Writers' Week at the Adelaide Festival, and the South Australian State Opera Company in 1978. Through its related concern with painting, the funds of up to \$15,000 a year are now disbursed more specifically.

Universally — as the broad and objective survey indicates — the most very greatest that is accomplished in vital to the health of the community, can also be its own financial return. The new, the testing, the exploratory, the research, the educational, and the promotional, which should keep our thinking set on the welfare of world-thinking, make straightforward facilities for the conservation of the business world and keep often too much for all but the most bold.

It is not in effect that the rich adapt that the rich get rich and the poor get poorer — which is a distressing sign of our funding. The art world is a multi-million dollar concern, yet while it needs huge sums to survive, it needs nothing but appreciation thinking to staff out its vital work and leave it in huge bad financial shape. Business men must be persuaded to private risk, tax deductible capital, as they would for research departments within their own firms. Funding from whatever source must be seen as affording artists the right to find out about research for the new, the innovative and one step the unknown — not just to allow bigger sets, costlier costumes and glitzier programmes for conservatism and establishment.

**Big Business and the Arts** looks over another aspect of the role of ARTS — a unique concern to encourage the private sector to give more support — and asks about its office response.



entertained throughout with a passion Ed had respected he possessed. Len's initial response was genuinely funny and he was treated with his performance. A flexibility and a capacity to exceed what Ed previously thought was a substantial limited range as an actor. He made an excellent lead for Lynne Coxon, the company's costume. What was lovely, whether swooping singing or dancing exactly as he should have been — simply lovely.

Set Russell's design for the simple set, the interior of an English country manor house was properly levels and also ingeniously contrived to allow the multiple castings of such principals as the aforementioned staircase, bar, vase and portrait, as well as Sunday forenoon chandelier and poison dart firing sponge. The check list, by the way, must not omit Christine Russell's brilliant stage management of a show equivalent to any 20th century theatre potest must have been excellent, since all the bits of business seemed to happen bang on time. The orchestra was under the direction of Denis Read (ex-leader from Rinaldo's Restaurant) and played quite well, although the fairly standard arrangements did not help the general atmosphere of the score much.

So much then for who did what. Only one thing remains to be said: I know why, since the house was three-quarters full on Thursday night, *Remembering Alice* was produced by The National Theatre of the Playhouse, what I don't know is how the National Theatre management is able to tolerate such easily obvious commercialism with the National Theatre's policy as proclaimed in the programme — "To provide challenging and stimulating theatre of quality, reflecting the tastes from the classical and modern repertoires." No, no, I suggest would object to the National Theatre doing not so subtiles with the odd score for money-squeezed here and there, but if these are up to here the credibility gap is unacceptable!

## COMMENT

continued from page 2.

comes, who are to popular them and 10% of the cost before the show even begins, so we are forced to cut our program costs in proportionately, a rather puzzling thing to do, indeed, particularly when a always-defeated and usually always a pretense to another. Heaven will be full of editors, rewards, scripts, film sets, lighting gels, office and director, there will be no room for the church or even God himself, who no doubt will be forced to work for the ABC, no doubt, in Sound Effects, or Special Projects with his mouth in a glass, and no work, whatever to do.

So, to conclude, we need to approach at our best capacity further support from our theatrical brothers. The Government, Cuttack, Cuttack and Cuttack have to have their act reviewed, and that golden Hollywood nation's white dove is a shiny leaden hawk in the circumpolar place as the war makes up before she illuminates

# Celebrating a memory

## SWAN RIVER SAGA

MARGOT LURIE

Reviewed by Peter Barlow in George Street from the Australian premiere of 1976. Directed by Peter Hall. Site Permitted

PHOTOGRAPH

*Swan River* stage the second time round is more of a celebration than a simple evening at the theatre. It is part of the WA Shakespeare week in honouring the State and both the theme of the play and its vision are supremely appropriate to the occasion.

Puritans, colonists, the small St George's Hall, a charming mosaico of a Greek Temple, serving as the official Lay Library, has for many years since duty in Government office space — even now it belongs to the Health Education Council. It was established by Governor Mathew a hundred years ago, and now reflected proves this is addition to its classical beauty it has lovely acoustics, though the relationship of stage to audience will need some reworking.

The *Saga* is the story of the first fifty years of the Swan River Colony, seen through the eyes of Elias Shaw, one of the first settlers, who sustained a full and interesting life with a rare gift of expressing his feelings and recording his experiences with passion, memory and humour, giving Mary Denck a wealth of material on fashion and a lovely poem.

Nick Pearce has made the play his own — also Elias Shaw and the extraordinary fact of staying the manuscript unphotographed, yet supporting constant portions of *Swan* stage long in the memory. In fact, having seen it some years ago, my own memory had somehow seized the "other" characters in three dimensions, so

informed a house infested with octopus, and yet delight says, "Five minutes Mr Cooley" will become an Australian saying "All the time in the world, Mr Gatsby" for Mr Gilbert Cuttack, Cuttack and Cuttack, *Brave Newness, Empire and Glory*.

There has never been a general theatrical monthly newsletter, promoting and sponsoring ABC theatre here that is the only one. The kind of drama rightwing websites are happy in the country for *Never Allez Vous* is a mug for all seasons. What we need to survive the kind of blood and throat bloody murder given on everywhere is the sympathy and coolness that our theatre is not Tolstoyan and a few both for the heart by way of consolation, but an unassimilable achievement in pure wonder. Cuttack, Cuttack and Cuttack need to work up a really new set.

We take a deep breath, put our teeth in, and on one nod more the laws of God, Christ, were tested has prodded the wheels and look at all that knock grace!

that the voids of the empty stage came as a necessary shock of surprise.

The play has been printed of some original Shakespeare material and in the better for it. There is a fascinating replication about the line "I am a memory" echoing from beginning to end, and the two scenes of departure, first leaving England, then leaving the property library provide a fine soliloquy for the intervening years of peace.

Highlights remembered from the earlier production will stand out. Elias' disillusionment originated with mother of last resort in her first vision from home — there, the last name of all, her lovely account of the Governor's Ball, celebrating the Colony's second anniversary — later a scene with a young grandfatherly (now that child was there) on stage? and finally the red embossed questioning by the old woman of the Lady of a lifetime of work and suffering, that brought Ruth nothing but "bitter grapes".

Alternating with acted scenes of Elias conversing with visitors and family there are episodes from diaries and letters, where the reading voice is accompanied by excellent slides of paintings and sketches, showing the beginning of Perth and environs.

The staging of the current production is less skilled than the earlier one at the Hall on the Wall. The stage is unusually high, and although good management, the background setting is ugly and strong, and the lighting harsh and insensitive, making it difficult for the spectator to accept the obviously created world of scenes.

However, the *Saga* manages a tour de force, and one wonders if any other nation will ever touch it. It will survive as a piece of historical history that transports purely regional interest yet a family rooted in the local soil, at the same time standing as a living memorial in a woman who can give in the punctuated pauses with



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## COME OUT

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beyond subscriber bookings. Adelphi's three major state subsidised companies, The State Opera, the State Theatre Company, and Australian Opera Theatre, all prepared special programmes for young people as part of COME OUT, and their respective productions performed in some interesting compartments.

The State Theatre Company mounted their young performance venue the Playhouse, in their Major Title, made for a production of local writer Rob Crozier's play *Crabbing It*. The group has a strong reputation throughout Australia for its excellent Theatre in Education work, but suffered slightly at the hands of a script which while you could of course tell, has been composed as an episode of *Bedford*.

Australian Dance Theatre on the other hand came up with a masterpiece of dance and theatre in *Willy* Children, a stunning collection of images and realities of childhood prepared by Anne Taylor from the thoughts of eighteen young children, who chose in the greatest order the collective title of "Mourning's Little Starlings," and seven members of the ADT company. Perhaps it can be seen as a tribute to the members of COME OUT that it has spawned one of Australia's most moving, and beautiful visual arts events, which, though created in the name of children, is equally powfully art work in thought or imagery. Anne Taylor gave three performances, both to school children and they proved beyond a doubt that they were well deserved.

Hearing the voices was the least of the audience's worries at the State Opera's production of *Threepenny Opera*, first seen

Let's Make an Opera. Young people again made up a sizeable proportion of the cast, but at this a self-consciously adult production marked with middle class values which bowed off the stage in profusion of applause to the Cries Let's which flowed down the throats of the young singers. For a production which, by its own admission attempted to prove that "Opera is not stuffy and cerebral", it achieved little to enhance the image.

There are bound to be failures in a festival such as COME OUT until the arts world come to terms with the cultural needs of young people, but it is important to point out the successes. Much of the stimulus comes of COME OUT's hidden away in little rooms in an small corners of a park where kids are learning and creating, experiencing the arts on their own terms. The so called visual arts programme of COME OUT/T 79 was a notable public success, which took no notice of the artificial barriers between visual and performing arts, but integrated them into a dazzling night for Adelaide citizens when they appeared in art shows, a large audience was amazed by a cascade of ingenious, instantaneous reliefs as the "Repubblican Lions" even and mice are still being delighted by COME OUT Trilogy to the State Transport Authority in the form of a road covered with landscapes by high school students.

Although COME OUT is now established as a major artistic force in South Australia, a very small. From a low position as a cultural body, and even a local underfunding towards youth arts, makes a hard committee to pitch the who might benefit most. But COME OUT can always be run with a primary concern for quality and the cultural needs and choices of young people. And with this to work about, it has got to be for everyone.

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Following the success of *A Manual of French Warfare* in South Australia, Brian O'Connell (Clem) Gorman has returned from residence in London (where one of his plays was produced at the King's Head) to take up a writer in residence with the State Theatre Company, Adelaide. *Trench Warfare* is to be published in the Currency/TA New Writing Series.

# Clem Gorman

## Let's Explore Australia

There is a strong learning trend in Australian theater over the past decade that the growth of Australian content and self-confidence, Australian choices and the unemployment, that stands out in the memory like a sunny day in London.

Yet it remains true that in the fundamentals of form there have been too few attempts to create anything new, anything springing from original Australian roots. The theater in Australia is still more Shakespearean than Australian in form. I am not talking in the easy game of knocking Australia. The standard and variety, the sheer statutory, of Australian theater companies at least familiarly with what's happening in the UK, but a verbal theater with European roots can be done also in original only.

What would an original Australian theatrical form look and work like — where it was at home?

To answer that question we need only look at the elements that make us Australian. The country first, urban and spacious, so particular upon us theater using large spaces. It's in Asia, so obviously influenced from other Asian theaters would be present, the slow theatrical sense of the body might adapt very well, or the intense and ancient sense of the Ibanian drama which so impressed poor old Ariadne. Australians aboriginal are an Asian people with their own highly developed oral and written theater which must obviously be a powerful element.

Of the European populations probably slightly more than half are of Celtic origin. The Celts had an extraordinarily rich historical and visual culture, based in mass, which has been all but effaced by English imperialism. Celtic Australians are denied, in their education system, any knowledge of their cultural roots. So this, too, must play a part.

The reader might be thinking, at the point, that it looks like a very listing any one of roughage which would tip through the system like the proverbial and make about as much lasting impression as a glass of water will. Not so, because all these elements have certain points strongly in common. They are archaic, they are emotional, they make music more than drama, song, words as much as theater. They

emphasize what you see as much as what you hear; they are not predominantly literary, and hardly analytical at all.

It would still require script, but script in which songs and stage direction would be of equal importance to the dialogue. It might involve the use of quite a lot of media technology. After all, Australia is a country that was born out of the Industrial Revolution and Australia feels very much at home with technology.

What about the content of the Australian theater? Not too different from the content of Australian plays, probably. The themes of Australian theater have been well represented, the paradoxes of an urban country that is vast and empty, the struggle against the forces (such as the industrial and nationalistic, Catholic, Protestant, suppressed knowability and all the rest). An Australian original theater would have to tell a story, parts are part of the history. In short, any content can be woven into substance, the key difference would be that the literary artist would not be everything. When theater began in Europe it was a principal form of communication. Now that job is done by media, what job can a theater do? I think the answer — and it is highly personal about — is that only theater can provide within the content of a tale which reflects the conflict experienced by an audience, consistent, free human contact with all its subtlety. The weakness of the live theater — as very human vulnerability — is its great strength in an age when many people are used of the social mechanics of TV in reverse. Merely to move the curtain in the theater is to embark upon a cult status, so they say, this is what theater has to offer, and this is a formal consideration, not one of content.

There is a Fringe company in Britain called Shared Experience, and while not warranting a moment to support, their Australian theater should again explore, look back and forward and in an uncertain mood something made in Britain. I must say that that group works in a way that I imagine might be very close to the way an

Australian original theater might work. The actors themselves arrived a great way gone, based on well known national roles — 1000 Nights, or whatever — and they work all over the stage, as and out among the audience, saying everything at each and every moment, really vulnerable yet totally in control. What it needs, which is mostly, is a splendid and growing. I can imagine Aboriginal theater working like that, or Celtic. Doyle is a wonderful, immediate, participatory, yet narrative, not an attempt to merely make puppets with people and images.

I believe there should be established — and we should not be interested in all the reasons why it's impossible, no funds, no confidence, "experimental theater that can offer" — a Fellow, funded, experimental company to explore Australia. When it fails, it should be allowed to. There is room in which theater with have simply earned fail, though it must, sometimes, go to success, something fail of progress is to be made. The point about the right to fail should be clearly determined. To bring the whole weight of the clumsy official apparatus of European style theater criticism to bear on an experimental theater is an ridiculous anachronism. Such a theater might operate best not as a public theater in the usual sense, though public performances would of course be given, but more on college or study-circles.

Of course there are funds. Australia is one of the world's richer countries, with an unemployment rate, even in these "bad times", that is the envy of any Third World country — and not a few European ones. Per capita income is still within the big five of the world. Who can put a price on the beneficial results of a people who have always had confidence when comparing their cultural product with that of others, discovering that they have got something that is uniquely and magnificently their own to contribute to the world's storyhouse of theatrical riches?

This will never happen while Australia is content only to imitate Europe and North America. Australia is not just a European country, it is itself, too. It is not an Old Decking. It is not even a studio. Nor is it a new. It is something else, a new thing, waiting for an new reflection to be looked back at from its surroundings. I think it's time the exploration of Australia began.

# A Sense of Insecurity

On amateur theatre groups that succeed? The quantum spring to my mind again and again during the sixth Newcastle Arts Council drama festival held in late May.

Despite a wide range of works, play after play seemed to have in latent a sense of insecurity. There were the self-doubts of the comic soap character Charlie Brown, the worries of two migrants about being buried as paupers in a strange land; a Tennessee Williams grand-dame, sensing the instability of her social position, an out-of-work. Not seems less blearily resting upon the mettle than is New York, a city strong, London, Clark, feeling in his gauche attempts at writing, and so on.

But any thoughts that the choice of plays reflected the collective sense of mind of these performers were dispelled at the wine-and-biscuits get-together which followed the presentation of awards at the final session. Visually the round moves from the formal rooms the Arts Drama Theatre at the University of Newcastle to the adjoining Staff House for the function. The pair that building had been booked for another function, in the nearly three hundred people who packed the theatre stood out, squatting at first into the narrow fire area between the tiered seating and the stage but gradually moving — perhaps one should say retreating — to the rear stage itself.

The talk was, of course, about the final result. It was all building self-confidence along the lines of "you did it that way but we liked the way that you did it". Many people found that had time of letting down of last year, regarding their adjudicator Peter Williams or his more detailed backstage discussions with the cast and crew of each of the fifteen plays. I found myself talking to a few members of Norman Soderby, author of one of the festival's most effective plays, *Three Ladies* and he outlined one which had been made in the production and "which" he believed had won the award. "But did they?" I asked. As played at the festival, the play was far too long and a bit too repetitive, despite having a marvellously well developed structure in which three actresses of very differing personalities portrayed in parallel three stages in the life of a young girl who becomes pregnant and finds it increasingly hard to care for an unwanted mother.

And this is the real value of drama festivals for amateur theatre: They enable people from far flung areas to go together and look at and talk about each other's work over days in the case of the Newcastle festival, or as only for two months at a year. And, while the award of prizes is a contentious subject, it does provide for a sense of competition, an eagerness to do better and to see whether you can top the others, and take home what Peter Williams, called somewhat

Ken Longworth  
reports on Newcastle's major amateur festival which was adjudicated by Peter Williams.

dynamically "the pot".

Peter Williams is the first adjudicator to have held the job at two Newcastle festivals. He did the job in 1973 and had two comments to make on the differences produced by the intervening four years. He said the standard of performances had improved greatly, but he also expressed disappointment that the choice of play had not. He appealed to amateur groups to read more widely because there were "some wonderful plays" waiting to be done which amateur groups never reached. I pressed him later for some ideas as to what sort of "wonderful play" he meant, but he was on route to taking a well deserved cup of coffee and chapter a promise to return to discuss the matter further. He was wayward in the making though so that my question remains unanswered.

It was a pity because his comment on the range puzzled me. The plays chosen this year were a very good selection, with none of the amateur drama like at Agatha Christie and a couple of Most Cowed pieces which toured in 1973. Authors representing included Samuel Beckett, Tennessee Williams, Tom Stoppard, Ned Sherrin, Peter Sturtevant, David Campbell and Ruth Park. Many of the better productions were from the pen of less well-known writers like Israel Horovitz, Norman Soderby, Marjorie Grey and John Macfarlane, with the latter offering the Australian premiere of the last-named's fascinating study of innocence among ten-year-old girls, *Howl Be Heel* and *Wheel Be Lunk*.

The standard of production and playing was the most balanced for years. Until the previous season it was virtually impossible to pick winners. In that season, Freestyle Players staged just one of their excellent production at the Ruth Park Little Room adaptation of *The Haig at the Beach* which quickly became the favourite for three of the awards — best production by Australian play and best actress (Elizabeth Hamilton as Marjorie Duncy). As a consequence, it got all three and two others besides, with Rosalie Marren who also deserved winning the best supporting actress trophy, as Gwendoline and the closing of the festival's archetypal award with another Sydney production, *Picture This!* (Stephen Flora, trumpet).

Spelling groups are predominant at the festival each year but they don't dominate it. There were six in six Sunday groups represented often by more than one play. There were three from

Newcastle, one from Maitland, and one from Armidale. The very receptive Armidale College of Advanced Education Drama Group, whose experimental work is always worth watching and hearing. For the third successive year, the CAE took out the adjudicator's special award for a play called *A Journey Into Outer Cosmic Space*, devised as an interesting way of exploring or attacking the functions of the various parts of the brain.

An interesting feature of the festival and the element of MOH seems to be strong was the strong showing by women directors. Only four of the fifteen plays had a woman at the helm, but they were among the best all-round work in the festival, in terms both of entertainment and of quality. Apart from Rosalie Marren's *The Haig at the Beach*, Ross Packham's production of *The Cremator* (based on Margaret Olley's *For Elephants*) was second prize (John Booth was the best actor award for his role of a wounded migrant in the play). And the other two firm favorites, Jim Cooper's production of *Three Ladies* for Windbag Players and Shirley Bloomfield's second act of *The Prowess of Second Avenue* for Newcastle Repertory Club could well have been winners. (Three Adjudicators take out the most promising across awards) with Lee Loftus the recipient.

Peter Williams commented on the strength of the female performances and the difficulty of making his choices in these categories, but the male performances this year also were good. Last year, the adjudicator was searching to find award winners among the men and several groups were bemoaning the fact that they just didn't attract male members. This year, men seem to have improved and it no longer looks as if amateur theatre will become an all female domain.

The strength of male playing was shown by the award of the best supporting actor trophy to Maxton Williams as a tortured husband in Michaela Thornton's production of *Israel Horovitz' The Lure*. Two of the other three actors in the company of chess could have been considered for acting awards (Wheeler, a Penrith group which has brought alternative theatre to the city, won the third prize for the play, directed by Ian Watson). There also were several actors who could have won the most promising senior trophy awarded to Daryl Sandy playing in Shirley's *The Prowess of Second Avenue*.

The play at the festival was perfect. One fault from which none suffered was one little criticism to mixed quality. There and again Peter Williams commented on the failing of players in the art of picking up each other's vocal rhythms so that there was not enough differentiation between

Continued on page 21.

# Let's Make; Secret Marriage; D'Oyly Carte

Adelaide and London were the focal points of the particular summer month for me, though big things were also going on in Melbourne that I missed because I had seen and reviewed them before (*The Master-singers of Nuremberg* and *The Triumph of Almaviva*) or would see them shortly later. But the Australian Opera production of *Patience* (Glyndebourne's Golden Week).

In Adelaide, State Opera came up with an interesting mixture of the old (Carissimo) and the relatively new (Belasco), as the title bit of temporarily transplanted London known more generally as the Regent Theatre, Sydney, D'Oyly Carte was presenting Gilbert and Sullivan in its most traditional.

The unimproved highlight of the month was the relatively topical presentation of Britten's *Let's Make An Opera* in Adelaide — especially the first two-thirds, the parts that come before the proper opera within the performance.

Which may call for a brief explanation for the benefit of those who are not familiar with the extraordinary piece. *Let's Make An Opera* is literally aimed at little children — a dramatised account of the creation and presentation of an opera for children. As such, it is somewhat aggressively didactic and didacticism, yet it is often obviously and in its best — as presented in this particular Adelaide production directed by Kevin Miles and designed by Lee Walker (both from the Adelaide College of the Arts and Education) — it can be a very effective entertainment not only for the young and impressionable but for the not-so-young and not-impressionable as well.

As played in Adelaide, the first two-thirds of the evening were set very much in the here and now. It was in no way trying to nod — often almost subliminally — that original Adelaide references were being addressed and there was always present, apparently unobtrusive but never very far below the surface, that marvellous sense of spontaneity that characterises the best of child performances and which Britten knew how to exploit so adroitly.

There were a good many moments when the comically apt took it that Adelphoi could use the audience, who were here presumably somebody thought amateurish, were even better, although they were on stage and the whole thing became a slice of the real here and now in which a passing audience you happened to be passing.

And of course that is just as it ought to be — particularly in such a piece, which has a certain amount of audience participation built in, although in this context the conductor of the night, Myra Freedman, also got into the act in the middle part, by opening a fair slice of her long

addressing — and sweetly bemoaning — the audience from the piano he rehearsed them in the brief silence he intended to be performed by them during the opera itself.

Indeed, the Let's Make part of the evening was admirable in just about every respect — down even to the intermission demonstration of stage machinery and lighting in the middle part of the evening. There are all too few opportunities for the ordinary theatre-going public to experience the mechanics of stagecraft first hand (usually the name of the game is a consciousness of the risks of the trade, rather than revelation). In principle, every theatre-goer knows that the whole stage picture can be convinced given or people at the risk of a scratch that the walls of the stage backdrop will pull away or fly away in a few seconds with effortless ease but actually seeing it happen has the magical fascination of any marginally increased insight into the technical wonders of the age.

The major flaw in *Let's Make An Opera* is that the opera itself (indeed *The Little Sweep*) tends to be an afterthought after the less formal atmosphere built up in the first two thirds of an evening. And because the first two parts were so effectively presented in Adelaide the final one was no doubt even less successful than it might have been elsewhere. This is of course more a criticism of the work than the production, for *The Little Sweep* is more suitable story than for a kid's performance than serious opera, in all but lacks the vital ingredient of all opera — a libretto that allows scope for drama to add new depth of

truth. We all know about the exploitation of child labour in the first days when cleaner sweeps were a part of the here and now, and no one can effectively preclude sufficient enjoyment of the particular drama to make it very relevant to contemporary life.

That said, it should be emphasised that the Adelaide production was generally excellent, and featured the most impressive performance overall I have yet seen from Kevin Milesman. He was absolutely at home, pedagogically, early in the piece, and never faltered in presenting a credible portraiture of Black Bob and Then the Coachman in the opera proper.

In its own way, *The Secret Marriage of Clarienna*, which alternated at that season with the Britten piece, was also a limited triumph once again, the major blemish that could be legitimately levelled at the production was the dense familiarity of the verbal language of the work itself. The problem was decidedly different from that of *Let's Make An Opera*, though, for Clarienna was no 19th-century Britten, or, to put it more appropriately, was not even the beginning of a pale shadow of his great contemporary, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

Much indeed, of the interest in a modern production of such a work as *The Secret Marriage* must rest on an unavoidable comparison in the experienced opera-goer's eye with the masterpieces of Mozart. Very often, his more approachable classical operas at its best, can be as witty as Rossini, as lyrical as Mozart or Verdi, as difficult-musicalised as any romantic



State Opera's *Let's Make An Opera*

would have to nominate the final result. Few can question the fact that no influences are added to the impact of gold mining with a sense of effort and.

Watson's musical planning, which would in itself work works such as *The Silver Marriage* of the natural world; more than possible by drawing the company, one is unable to study the about details, if they are to be performed at all, they must be performed now or less originally conceived.

Given these inevitable problems, State Opera's *Seven Marriage* was very good, bearing in mind a very well balanced cast of Thomas Edwards, Paul Heggerty, John Wood, Georgina Amor, Ruth Gruver and Roger Howell, an excellent conducting team from Ken Murray and an equally excellent orchestra and stage design. Not to mention the brilliantly complicated revolving set of Axel Berni which also served as the setting as well as an excellent backdrop in the middle part of *Le Nozze di Figaro*.

The *Seven Marriage* is the kind of framed work from the literary nephews' repertoire of the past that deserves the occasional revivals for isolated venues, and State Opera deserves credit for having revived it so admirably in the current context.

The first-ever visit of the much-revered D'Oyly Carte Opera Company to Australia was an unusually disconcerting experience. It was remarkable to have them here yet realising that they were not up to the level of the indigenous Gilbert and Sullivan we have seen in Australia in recent years. The tendency, after first exposure, was to search either desperately for reasons to excuse their failings in terms of local standards or to somehow justify the international comic innuendos involved in their long trips to Australia.

In terms of evenly-timed G and S the most D'Oyly Carte could offer in its first two Sydney efforts (MHS *Plough* and *The Mikado*) was an antediluvian *Malcolm* to the effect that life

wasn't meant to be easy, and a reference to punishment in such colorfully monologued Asian terms as *Wu-tschang-shan* and *Kansome*. Not good enough, when old Rosalie, and even the venerable Australian Opera staff, have been doing infinitely better for years.

There were adorable places in the D'Oyly Carte *Carte* that I have never heard G and S more beautifully performed, musically, than it was in this version, nor have I seen more visually exhilarating stage details, nor have I witnessed more enviable audience or anything like that individual quality of the D'Oyly Carte character vignettes.

Yet in all regard, on first hearing, to be entirely honest with the 1979 Australian concert that is increasingly about the traditional British underworld. The insights provided by this tour were the subtleties of richness that would resolve the clash of a culture rather than convert a courtly acquaintance with the G and S genes into lifelong friend.

At first contact, on opening night, the whole company seemed to be excessively self-satisfied and inward-looking — as if it were claiming to be in the possession of all and others ought to be thankful. For seeing it on any terms. The attitude had clearly changed over by the Saturday matinee following the Sydney premiere of *MHS Plough*; in particular, John Reed, who had just about proved his way through the role of Dr Joseph Porter (KOB), on opening night, was infinitely more conversant — and, of course, human.

The severely picturesqued *Plough* set — with a nice complement of real peat, earthy reds ringing in the foreground and a beautiful sense backdrop of drags at anchor — does a good job of capturing a peasant version, particularly because it was accompanied by an equally pastoral chorus of miners. Apart from Reed most of the principals were very young — some might even claim too young, in particular of

Patricia Lovested, who played Little Buttercup *Plough* and Kasah in *The Mikado* a week later. And such dragon lady style as Kasah by rights deserved physical fragility even if pushing a necessity to achievement.

Master Reed was an excellent Ralph Rackstraw with a nice man's voice even if it seemed very percussive on the top when pushed, and Peter Lewis came up with a plausibly young Captain Corcoran even if need a little too low key. Vivian Turner's *Amphion* was a trifle wooden in the singing department, but was beautiful in the look at and to her son. John Ashton's *Dish* (Dreadful) started off a good deal more like a farty caddie boy, complete with fuzzy grey hair, than the fairly serious villain he ought to be, but developed quite nicely in the second act.

Overall, *The Mikado* was more successful on opening night and got a good deal better by the end of its five week. Reed's *Ko-Ko* was much more resourceful and fresh than he seemed had been in *Plough*; Philip French's *Nanki-Poo* was exquisitely measured and acid, and very well snap-acted. Bertram Lally's *Yum-Yum* was nicely shaped, as G and S requires the prima to be the main requirement of measure, making out of their voices is to look pretty and sing like an angel, and this he did perfectly.

Kenneth Sandford's *Post-Bah* was a little lower key than we are used to in topnotch productions, but nevertheless a highly professional comic turn for delivery of his surveillance little speech about coming back in mystery as a presented propitiatory globe was exemplary. And I have never before seen a better *Mikado* than John Ashton, nor do I ever hope to see one. The person who plays this particular role doesn't really have much of a job, but Ashton made the most of it in all departments. He looked every inch a bloodthirsty emperor, spoke with the required degree of imperiousness and sang with a beautifully rich, deep-throated, bass tone. His rendering of "My Object All Subdu'd" was a real gem.

I cannot help thinking, finally, that the rest of D'Oyly Carte has just a previously seen to the rest of the *Snugger*: Chamber Orchestra a few years back — whose *Mozart* offended me deeply the first time I heard it because it was so different to the *Mozart* I knew and loved. The point was that this is how they play *Mozart* in *Snugger* ... and they have a long tradition of playing *Mozart*, just as everyone else does, and where to say our way is better than theirs?

D'Oyly Carte's way of performing G and S has the most imperceptible advantages of all, of course. Which is not to claim that when it does it always right, merely to point out that as way has a special case for being taken out of, and must not be dismissed out of hand merely because it is so unobtrusive and different from the way we are used to doing things on the other side of the globe.

\*David Gyger is editor of *Opera Australia*



Thomas Edwards (Plough), Paul Heggerty (Ko-Ko) and Ruth Gruver (Yum-Yum) in *Seven Marriage*

# COPPELIA — stunning sets and costumes

I always enjoyed the Australian Ballet's old production of *Coppelia* mainly because it was always a production filled with life and high spirits and it was always extremely well danced. I was always disappointed by the fact that it didn't seem to have in a recognisable world either real or pretended, that there was no feeling of time or place and no sense of community.

Now with Peggy van Praagh's new *Coppelia* we have a work that exists in a real community like, being out somewhere in Eastern Europe say Hungary or Romania but which seems to be served by its clichéd choreography and dismal animation. So much of the Saint-Louis/Cochran choreography has been buried under amorphousness and oddities, and what is new is banal.

Perhaps money makes the heart lead but I don't think the new production is as well danced as well as the old one was under Prendergast though the old criticism may be misleading and nurturing new colour colour tales. I don't think I've been swayed by a lack of attention and concern for the corps de ballet.

So much of the stage, work is lazy and undirected these days and not just in *Coppelia*, it was the same with *Fille du Quatre-Feuilles*. Obviously the corps is not getting the attention

training and rehearsal that it needs and should be given. Young poor teachers may come and go and the seats are marked in the corps books for a few programmes, but then things seem to go back to their usual comedy style. I can only hope they will replace the current ballet masters and conductors with people that are more stringent in their demands and whom the corps de ballet will respect. As things are now, the corps is slightly in danger of fragmenting altogether.

Stylistically the ballet is beautiful though it doesn't Prendergast's design for Act 1 isn't a little too close to them for the 19th century for comfort or originality. Prendergast has designed the usually melancholy Act 3 as something that could only be described as Transylvanian Baroque and it conveys an apt sense of colour and colour explicitly. The design for the melancholy Act 3 which at one can ever seem to make one sense of isolating melancholy as a sunny and forceful one could make the same goes for the wonderfully conceived and designed costumes.

*Coppelia* was one of the last flourishes of high French Romanticism. After this and the Paris Commune that broke down just months after the ballet's premiere, things like this were no longer performed and believability certainly then passed in the Romantic and their important French

masters like the brothers Petipa. As such, any production of *Coppelia* I feel, should mirror the design of the original, one such design suspending will upset the balance of sympathy within the work. This is what happened with Prendergast's version and it is what has happened with van Praagh's production.

The sympathy here goes all for the perfumed, needled and pampered character of Dr Coppeline. But to Ophelia's distress and the gripping realisation that Ray Lovell gave to *Coppelia*, the end of the second act when Semolina's impersonation of the "perfect" still Coppelia is rejected for the real it is as Dr Coppeline realises what a bad and self-deceiving master he is, all the sympathy goes to him, changed-on the stage floor, staring into the void. He becomes a senile old fool, especially tormented and taunted by the local and village members of this little Romanian town.

As a result, Act 3, where Dr Coppeline is nowhere to be seen, is even more cold and reasonless than ever, especially when some of the choreographer's interpolations, which are above the musical level in terms of invention.

The doctor and van Praagh have tried hard to put more colour and purpose into it, transforming it into an almost pagan fertility ritual and mass marriage scene but all this results,



Josephine Furrer (Ballerina); David Burch (Doctor) and Joseph Jennings (Piano) in *Coppelia*. Act III

Photo: Bertrand Giacob

other diversions and crossed, bare facing about doesn't in the least compromise. We feel that we are watching the closing work of a triple bill programme, rather than the conclusion of a full length work. Still, one can't blame it all on the producers it is in the nature of Coppelia's construction to make that not the weaker, even the sub-structure of Balanchine would have to give in.

The money spent on the costumes for the Twelve Hours of Night must have been enormous judging from their liveliness but the story requires only four. The costumes and the choreography is so simple that one can't remember a single detail after the finish. There are small compensations though. Lynette Moreau dancing the Dancer solo was wonderfully fluid and elegant, looking for hope that she had in the *Alouette* part she does in the first programme and the Major General, who looked especially like the star of the concert.

One young girl, deserving of special praise is Janice Michel who danced the Peasant girl. She obviously has full personal care and thought into the role and her delicate bearing, gentle shaping and soft, clear phrasing and turnout made her

rendition of Prayer one of the highlights of Act 3.

Ann Jensen was perfect as far as it was concerned for the central role of Swanilda right from her very first entrance and the final scene, her characteristics and method of work complemented each other. There is a sad never has been very much light and shade with Swanilda, she quite simply has to be portrayed as a clever, quick witted ingenue who simply loves her doltish boyfriend. Freya and when compared to the others in great need of her attention to "that rather stiff looking monarch" Coppelia.

What was so appealing about Jensen's Swanilda is that it was obvious that her love for Freya along with her natural animal instincts pushed her into understanding the doll so as to love Coppelia more. From her need to stop Coppelia killing her sister (keep the doll live). It became, in Act 3, a very vivid allegory of life, playing and maturingly questions. "Yes, Coppelia is correct" to see that he has successfully given the doll life, but Swanilda compensates the doll in her and distract him, but Freya is also at loss with the doll for so he doesn't. And when the plaything is over, Coppelia

wishes to be deeper but Freya who "wishes" to be real flesh and blood over human nature still pressed on the choices of the doll.

Metaphysical perhaps like this isn't of course necessary to one's enjoyment of the work as a whole, but it is interesting to see that these themes have obviously been considered by Duleek and his cast. Most of the audience will love the dancing, both in the places of the act and scenes and be deservedly moved and touched by the elegantly dressed "toys" that so amazingly come to life. But it does seem a shame that this act has been exhaustively worked on at the expense of the balance of Act 3.

Barbara Cox was also at home in her role of Freya. There was not much in the way of drama and/or delivery of character for her to worry about and she could be left free to dance with that wide, open style that is so natural to the company. At the moment though, it seems that Ms Cox has a tendency to take in the middle of the phrases, they start clearly and finish crisply but they blur half way through and the ensembles, whatever it may be, loses its natural momentum because of it.

David Burch was a fully trained in the part, by was quick and alert in the choreographic demands and although not as technically proficient as Cox he didn't have that distractingly inferior quality. Christine Walsh as Swanilda unfortunately avoided behind Swan. In Act 1 she appeared not to realize the presence of the doll, as all so that the later's plan with her mate to strangle Coppelia (or didn't) have any point or purpose other than the fact that they were all a flock of hooded doves looking for something to do. Her dancing left something to be desired too. Jensen is more technically able, this obvious but Walsh could have compensated by finding a different quality to display in Swanilda.

The role of Wiene was was varied and contrasting with her and Burch, whereas with Jensen and Cox one could see that it was one of an age old ritual of jealousy for young members of your partner's circle to see of what and who can beat the mate, that causes her to love you, if you can't bear them. The Act 3 role for Jensen and Walsh were altered too, the times and forces that Jensen imagined, Walsh wouldn't. But these were small sympathetic understandings that are generally due to different interpretations of both of them and not in the nature of the production as a whole — its problems and shortcomings are elsewhere.

As far as Act 2 is concerned, it was a travesty of the ABs to get Coppelia to close the production, but a success of the overall concert and the truly balance of the three acts. I think they should have got someone who was more aware of the Balanchine's structure and of choreographic posing in general. Still, a lot of people are going to love the new Coppelia and the AB can be assured of full houses, that all we mustn't forget those running costs and contracts



Ann Jensen (Swanilda) and Mary Forni (Dr. Coppelia) in Coppelia Act III. Photo: Beaurois-Lewis

# The Queensland Ballet's Autumn Season

Saturday night brought me my initial experience with the Queensland Ballet. Having lived in Brisbane only two months, I looked forward to seeing the State Company. The company, consisting of thirteen full-time dancers, presented an fall season with a varied programme, so varied that it gave the appearance of a cabaret. It contained a bit of everything, a Bourneville of the 1930s era through to a ballet recently choreographed by Artistic Director Harold Collier. Sandwiched between were ballets that ran the spectrum of melancholy, comic, and dramatic. Unlike a cabaret, the sum of the ballets did not make for a satisfying whole.

Not that dances must be similar or related, but instead, a programme should be consciously varied and constructed with a sense of continuity. Presenting seven dances by seven very different choreographers gave the appearance of a workshop production. If the programme were theorized, it would help to solve the problem.

The evening began with August Bournonville's *La Vestale*. It is a Spanish-themed piece in two acts. The Ballet has a folk dance that and it must be performed with a precise tight attack. The dance can be exciting if danced very clearly and sharply. It was not the case Saturday night and the piece suffered accordingly. Though Garry Doherty had only a small role, he enlivened the dance with a lighthearted and pretense lacking from the remainder of the cast.

*Clowns*, choreographed by Dan Astor is the type of contemporary work that suits the company very well. The dancers handled the dance with confidence and clarity. The ballet is infused with a sense of mystery, which proceeds through a cycle almost absent of feeling. The dance is based through conflicting relationships where the theme of manipulation is strong and prevalent.

Kenneth Macmillan's *Point d'Entrainement* is a historical ballet that pleased the audience. It seems a bit dated and fails with its theme of three women, circa 1930, and their slippstick antics at the beach. The dancers treated the dance with a neoclassical approach which was quite finely handled at times. It may have been the execution of the choreography, if so, they were successful.

*The Swan Lake* just as I knew was performed adequately. It is a piece that contains moments when the dancers have an opportunity to display their virtuosity. A certain excitement was lacking, but nonetheless, the two was precise and steady in their performance.

Jane Blanch and Martin Raueck were great artists from the Australian Ballet. Their stage maturity and strength in the *Spartacus* pas de

deux projected a strong sense of professionalism.

*Closer Out of Court* with its music a rock Opera in Matilda's trademark. Choreographed by Peter Dovell, the basis of the ballet is the various encounters and relationships of a man and the two women in his life. The scene takes place after a tennis match, it is a mostly predictable dance with an arranged meeting and shooting thrown in for good measure. Donald Macleod handled the movement well, but his acting was overbearing and hokey. The two women, Jacqueline Kay and Denise Silver danced the steps with steady accuracy.

Harold Collier's *Dance Space II* closed the programme. It is a pleasant movement ballet. At intervals the dancers brought life to the different sections, which with an effective movement pattern make it an easy dance to watch. At times it lacked the freshness that seemed necessary and became laboured during those

moments.

In writing a programme named as it was, a company needs not only strong technical dancers, but dancers equally proficient in dramatic and comic abilities. At the time most of the Queensland dancers fall a bit short in all categories. It is a young company and the strengthening of their technique and artistic capabilities will evolve with time. With a few more stage成熟ities, the company will be able to handle the varied works currently in its repertoire, at a more proficient level.

This is Harold Collier's first full year as Artistic Director. In dance, time is often the measure between inadequate quality and good quality. With positive direction, support, belief in the personality of the company and of course hard work a company steadily will form. It is not difficult to conceive seeing this company evolve into a moving force in Queensland.



Denise Silver & Donald Macleod in *Dance Space II*

## Children's Theatre in America continued from page 15.

children in the audience? Do class my respectability as a present of festive, joyful, preceding expression of the way the world works and not mere idle pleasure?

### THE EVERYMAN PLAYERS

New Orleans, La. *Play Double-Decker*

Because this piece was produced by Orlin Levy, long-time officer of children's theatre associations and research pronouncements on children's theatre, I expected something good. The Everyman Players production deserved the collection of sexy Mother Goose nursery rhymes as "an exciting collection of action, song and games" which "happily enough are Everyman Players' tradition of acted literature". It was performed by a group of highly trained adults in pastel costumes of literary role, and had as much to do with theatre as Shakespeare has to being gazing. Would I wish to present the exacting style of what is essentially stanzaic communication between adults and children? Or to support the upgradations of children's own roaming and chanting games by simple minded adults? Is the Company aware of the original, brief often still藐视 collection of so many nursery rhymes? And all this from the man, who besides writing Richard Nixon's Act, and

"I believe theatre for children must begin with the altered consciousness of life. Theatre for children demands drama of conflict within the mind, a conflict about something vital - The Chakras Syndrome" is apparent.

This is the precise philosophy that would expose children from the consequences of abuse or nature, that would encourage square hard-core truck, that would deny pain, the tragedy, the importance of life?"

Or is there something in Little Miss Muffet and Humpty Dumpty that I have missed? Do I want children to think that there is all sugar and light? No

### THEATRE OF YOUTH COMPANIES

Bethesda, Md. *Two fold tales*

Who control, in a present, should I concern over the perpetuation of race stereotyping? How can I provide children with productions from other cultures without despising these cultures? At least there was one black actor in TOTY — but what do children think of blocks when he plays a solitary speaking gentleman in an otherwise all-white African folk tale? Or when they hear adults saying, "One, blocks are good imitators of mountains"? What do they think of the Jewish race when an otherwise perfect American speaking woman publicises her constant hand wringing with "Oh my" like? How can I believe TOTY's stated objective? "We are concerned with developing people through drama?" when it propagates race, sex and age stereotyping? Centuries notwithstanding, how much racialised effect is there in a cardboard

mane deck on a locomotive in a theater, simply turned around when it is time to disappear? Would I want children to think that the theatre hasn't any stunning magic? No

### THEATRE 5

Ottawa, Canada.

Am I willing to present a stage that four marching blue check costumes and four adults trying to be youngsters are the ingredients of good theatre, especially if accompanied by a direct moral message? That hard work is its own reward (reinforcement) "employment"? That women should stay home to care, doubtless domesticated daughters (even if they are single mothers?) desired wives? If the performance is an Theatre 5's teacher class, "world class theatre", then there's little hope for theatre in all. Do I want to present a theatre company for children which is proud of its connection by the United Church for an unexercised documentary, played in churches all over Canada — is should this kind of work be left alone to form "church-in-education teams"? Do I think that Isaac Christian Andreassen's *Follow Traveller* presented as a story, Tell of magic, romance, fantasy and (un)realism? is a notable contribution to International Year of the Child in my theatre? Or do children deserve a basic basic matriculation, a little explanation of why it was even necessary to have an International Year of the Child in the first place? Would the safety whistleblowers be worthy of children reading good theatre? No

### THEATRE 101C, INC.

Wilmette, Illinois.

What is the value in presenting to children no funny excerpts from Shakespeare? Will it not then appear for more, or make Shakespeare seem like a living comic book? Does this bring Shakespeare's first primary concern with "self", with "theatre"? Do I want children to think that Shakespeare, no matter how well performed, simply down character sketches good for a laugh? No

### IMAGINARI THEATRE COMPANY

St Louis, Mo.

*Auditioncation II*

The production, for greater senior high school audiences, stamped to use a variety of drama and dramaturgy to show how ideas can be tested out. But unfortunately the ideas were banal and trivial. What would "out to eat" or "your hand" play be in this context? Has the company a fear of presenting tough or complex ideas in techniques? Is "brevity" simply a desire to try to control such an audience a reye of the world, because people have a suspicion that they cannot be both serious and entertain in the theatre? Does the Head of the company, despite its pretensions to the contrary, in playing the same role as commercially controlled television, make them all think they are thinking and then they won't,

and then they'll be proven about the focus that determine their lives? Do I want future generations to get away with that kind of response to life? No

### METRO THEATRE CIRCUS

St Louis, Mo.

*Art in Action*

The purpose of this highly talented ensemble "is to provide a live creative theatre experience for young people and to stimulate interest and participation in the creative arts". However, the techniques alone (no matter how good) are not enough. Without point of coherence, is it possible that we are showing children that an "expression" is empty without coded explanation of it, the mechanics of communication and migration in the world from which the idea emanated? Is "art for arts sake" still a current philosophy in theatre for children? If so, why, when a has long term (planned) in a child theatre?

### SOUTHERN EDUCATIONAL THEATRE

Blacksburg, Va. *Barriers*

Apart from the expensive publicity (a moment of theatre in dancing, so spellbinding, as will reveal the mid-level production on Broadway) I think SET is the only company besides Stage One that I would consider — and for many different reasons. However, as a revivable show, and coming as it does from the "deep south" is quite remarkable in its combination of theatrical validity and attempt to make a few salient points. What is says to children is that theatre can be vulgar, coarse and unpredictable dramatically. It gives children some idea that there is a range of theatrical expression, and may possibly help towards exploring to choices that is adults, we choose from a large range of theatre experience for our own satisfaction. Clearly would it cannot say deeply moral things, but it certainly can alert young people to the intellectual and moral pretensions no sugar-coated in productions represented as, for example, the *Showboat*. There were two reports of SET's programme which would assist us in a buying basis that outlined above. One is the formidable *After* of Randa Forman as a drama — reflecting in her sombreness and her reflectability, and the other is the use of a kind of *Requiem of Light* characterised by the few, well fleshed out characters, as the whole Showboat. For she expressed clearly all the attributes of a expressive commitment, but with an explained sympathy and caring going beyond any of the stereotyping in other Showboat productions. There is a missing aspect of choice in the production probably because of the situation in detail and content. Would I put this production on with education money in school time? Probably, because the staff was supported by an intention to encourage young people to the art of theatre, and to pay attention to issues from every day life?

Writing the poor has been useful, because  
Continued on page 44



# Professionalism and the Vocal Ensemble

Becoming truly professional is very hard for a small vocal ensemble, and it is not even certain that the enormous effort involved is wholly worthwhile. Most vocal ensembles, as concert as they are often called, begin life with programmes of Italian and English madrigals, French chansons, German part songs, Spanish villancicos and so on. They start life on stage in a half-hysterical fashion, look mildly surprised and sometimes even a little pleased if there is audience applause and generally behave with a marked lack of showmanship, not to mention the industry of good concert manners. If they are a truly amateur group that will still attract many listeners, who may even regard their relative unpolishedness as a sign of integrity. As the stage they will probably make a recording like the disc recently produced by Cherry Pie of the Lorraine Consort of Singers under the title of *The Lorraine Consort's Salmon Collection*. This will have a decent average standard of vocal performance quite attractive in its way but hopelessly unconvincing when compared with the standard reached by the more experienced ensembles. To perform a popular Elizabethan madrigal is a possible answer, as with all the good will in the world, not really a contribution to the world of professionalism.

If an ensemble goes further than this, reviving and improving its performance, indicating a willingness to work at and cultivating the intensity of long practice, the ensemble will probably become known beyond the music-lovers' ghetto. It may be asked, as the King's Singers were once asked to try at least one vocal backing for light or even pop recordings and television sessions. It will help to underpin the seriousness of experienced stage and studio performers and will sharpen up the stage manners and dress and manners on stage lightened in its programming. The King's Singers started with straightforward part-song arrangements of light, popular and folk songs in several ways which so far had effectively or to this in the audience with an unspoken reason. They have extended this principle backwards through the second half of the programme, as can be heard on the two



discs issued by EMI of their tenth anniversary record at the Royal Festival Hall in London.

Record one (EMI 3003) consists of the kind of music — Renaissance part songs and interesting 20th century pieces — with which they would once have made up a complete programme. Record two (EMI 3006) entirely consists of folk, pop and novelty songs, arranged by some of the group's regular collaborators in an adult and sometimes pointedly shadowy manner. Another record, King's Singers also bring together one side of songs by Blaikie and Sison and another one of songs by Norl Cross. This is whimsical, very adult and witty, using, like but not like to the clever and tuneful style of group best established for itself in the course of its recently increasing professionalism. On a new disc entitled *Dragon Flight* (EMC 0360) the King's Singers give all the way into making professionalism with unashamed recording offices and unashamedly taking songs by Lazarus and McCorvey, David Byrne, Simon & Garfunkel and Bob Dylan, among others, bring out the strengths of the group at health versus of the macabre. American success does seem to be required equipment by almost every singer entering the pop field.

In this disc and in other recent records the King's Singers can claim to have become fully professional in skill, manner and general performance attitudes, but the danger is that their performances on the stage will soon increasingly become simply a bag of tricks and clever novelty act after another. They will then have to decide whether to go on the discos created out by Ward Swingle's Swingle Singers, who make all their recordings, including their recordings of Renaissance and more recent pieces, with unashamed studio techniques and actually copied these characteristics in the concert hall through the use of individual isolated microphones. I find Swingle's 'Hi-fidelity of professionalism' more thoroughly involving in a dozen or so amount of stage movements in appropriate songs and the use of some stage narrations, and ultimately more convincing. It is true that Swingle's 'Hi-fidelity' is quite different from that of the traditional free performance of a vocal ensemble. Once this is accepted, however, the superb quality of the group's musicianship and the complete effort of their performances, which seems to me essentially more serious in the box sense of that term, continued to make their recent Opera House record entirely remarkable and, except for the detections of television news, very satisfying.

The King's Singers have not included their original source of inspiration in their recent recordings, and that is wellied *Contes des Chevaliers* (EMI 0362) is entirely taken up with German part songs of the late Renaissance and early baroque periods and with Spanish part songs covering the period between 1650 or so and 1680. They are charming and successfully sparkling in the German songs, if a little floridish in their handling of the language, but the Spanish pieces on the other side of the record find them for the most part woefully lacking in precision of tone and fiery attack. This is very mild, adult singing, the singing of a group which seems to have settled for the role of agreeable entertainers rather than of truly reaching musical interpretation.

(Continued from page 14)

in acted interpretation. The MRPG themselves are reluctant to view it simply as an outlet, if *speculatively*, of art.

To these representatives rather a further stage in their long term ambition of creating a genuine community involvement with live theatre. The focus continues the process begun with their first show, *A Big Meal for the Lord*, a process aimed at overcoming the

deeply conservative and elitist which affects much of contemporary theatre in a technologically influenced world. The label of community is becoming almost synonymous with theatre companies. All too often it is a meaningless title, a mask for spurious mediocrity. The MRPG are at least making genuine efforts to give the concept some meaning. Their four shows managed to attract over eight percent of the population of Albany

Weddings or less than a week must be a promising portent. But the challenge will be to consolidate this success, to form a still enthusiastic permanent and cost, smaller audience in other types of theatrical performances. For the MRPG, as for Chorus' *Home*, life cannot be all bread and custard. A new theatre company working in the Australian countryside will find it difficult enough task to maintain a supply of bread

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## Italian film with a message

A gritty little film about the disadvantages of being an Italian emigrant to Australia is目前正在上映 at the Filmarama Cinema in St Paul's Lane, Darlinghurst and may be rented from the co-operative. It's title is *Il Migrante* (the Other side of the Coin) and it was made at \$6 million by Fabio Cicali. The dialogue is almost all in Italian and cash can be raised for subtitles when we need. Actually the lack of these does not seriously impede understanding.

The film 40 minutes long is well made with Canadians doing the camera work as well as directing. Sets Walker editing and producing lighting by Peter Guy and sound by Gianni Cicali. Chie Tiffani and John Whiterton. The cast is made up of Darlinghurst Italians, many of them partners of the Garthwaite Bar for pasta were coffee and talk. The Italians are either out of work or in the lowest kind of jobs — laundry cleaning is one. There talk is of bosses landlords, the police, their children who can't leave their leases because they do not know

English and of Australian attitudes towards them.

The story is loosely linked to an Italian migrant producer the deportation early last year of Iannino Sartori who had first visited Australia to participate in the migrant workers conference held in Melbourne in 1970, then returned at the invitation of Melbourne Italian set up a voluntarily funded welfare centre for Gilday and Brinsford. Vic He married a newspaper, *News-Press* in the Italian language which failed to meet with the approval of influential Italians. The film is the first in what is hoped to be a series which will give voice to specific migrant problems, including the fact that 51 per cent of the total immigrants are migrants, 11 per cent of them classified as living below the poverty line.

Cicali has made a film with a message, but he made it well. It is neither boring, nor violent, nor depressing in spite of the reference to the "modest life in another country" of the Italians.

### LETTERS from page 6.

created in 1962. When the cultural and social climate of Hungary was hardly as open as it is now and yet Mr Lazar, I have experienced Hungarian theatre as an art form. It should also be remembered that while Mr Lazar concocted a story about the openness of power Hungarian theatre of that era was very concerned indeed of any kind against the problems that looked like getting common support. It would not be credits that what happened to Oskar Kerec and the Theatre "National" in Czechoslovakia.

Further in this while it may be wise to talk about the division of 1956, no one can tell me that it was wiped away and forgotten by Hungarians still in me in Hungary especially by others who are firmly attached to the Hungarian folk heritage like László Seres.

One of the facts above seems encouragingly against Mr Lazar's rapid arguments, a generalised as anyone with the slightest sense of imagination that there aren't problems that can be divided between the Roman invasion of Spain, the opening of the Suez or the subsequent Marshall and the events of the Russian invasion of Hungary in 1956.

But then perhaps Mr Lazar doesn't permit a fully free to have imagination or a sense of humour despite the fact the latter is one of the most alluring, elusive and measureable of all the performing arts forms.

Lastly, I don't consider a review dealing with problems of dramatic structure, choreographic structure and dances, necessary to be "empty indeed".

Yours faithfully,  
William Macleod  
Dance Critic Theatre Australia

Continued from page 4

I discovered that it was trying to determine some criteria for children, pleasure and surprise myself by closing the quiet scenes work and art quite vulgar. What I have repeated in essence are those productions which pretend to a moral value which is based primarily in the ignorance of the real world and a toy perspective that what is happening a single Monday of these many ways of looking at the world are or should be polarised in the education ideal or otherwise of children who are going to have to contend with extraterrestrial social problems which we, as parents and educators have recognised but not changed.



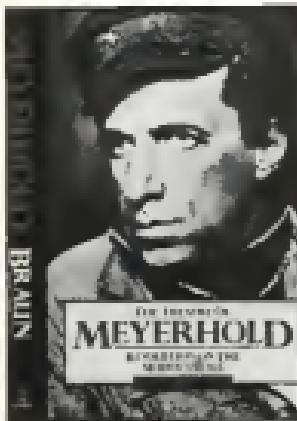
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# Anti-illusionism, Meyerhold and Piscator



**The Theatre of Meyerhold** by Edward Braun  
(Methuen, pp 215-256)

**The Theatre of Erwin Piscator**, by John Wilton  
(Methuen, pp 215-256)

Here are two of the most important and the most interesting theatre books to be published in this country in the last five years. This is a time when increasingly the variety of good direction is being lamented; it is a time when the divide between the adherents of American naturalism and its detractors is becoming more pronounced and entrenched. Both are being made for writers who can write drama for the theatre rather than words for the page. There is a growing interest in Brecht and in the playwriting in the work of directors such as Grosvenor. And there is a new apprehension creeping in to the discussion of the old simple divisions between French naturalism and German (the Australian National Character). It is appropriate that accounts of the work of two of the greatest anti-illusionistic directors of this century should appear now to inform people and to balance the relatively familiar work of Brecht and the Americans.

The scope of Meyerhold and Piscator's work, even simply in terms of resources, is breathtaking. With casts of up to 100 characters, complex settings with multiple revolts, kidnappings, multiple plots and sub-plots, progressions and other elaborate scenes, musical and literary resources, they were able to explore the technology of the theatre and move beyond dramatic naturalistic theory to make the wrong part of the dramaturgy itself. Even in today's financially more restricted theatre the possibilities of computer memory banks, lasers

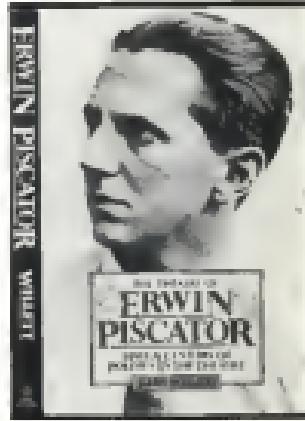
and holographs would have excited them enormously.

The interest in technology and theatricality was for both directors to serve their aims for theatre in society. Piscator wished to bring politics into the theatre and use it as a tool for the Marxist analysis of contemporary events — the new realities of industrial processes and class conflicts which the old naturalistic theatre was unable to treat. If Brecht was the theorist of the left, then Piscator, as Brecht himself acknowledged, was its master builder.

Meyerhold's political aims were less specific although along the same lines. He was the first great Soviet director but his early interest in symbolism and constructivism increasingly alienated him from the theoretical and political establishment which was eventually to set up Socialist Realism as the official theatrical form. He drew on many different periods and styles including the commedia dell'arte and the traditional Chinese drama to develop a theatre of grotesque and tragic comedy which would confront the audience with the contrasts and the contradictions in life, and pull them out of the complacent acceptance they got from surface conventions. In his early days his work suffered from writers who automatically fell back on the old tricks of the natural theatre. A dedicated communist, who was one of the first Russians to declare himself for the Revolution in 1917, he was eventually in a position to run his own Studio and train his actors in 'non-illusionism' as work in his way. By then, however, he was falling foul of the authorities who began to find ideological faults in his work.

So one of the great initial expulsions of theatre as a means of education and propaganda came to be served of Piscator — a puritanical mind which implied that he was preoccupied with form to the exclusion of the political message but which chose to include any theatricality which did not conform with the accepted standard of socialist realism.

These studies are both excellent in their different ways. Edward Braun's, on Meyerhold, is a detailed, comprehensive survey study of a coherent body of work. John Wilton's more broad-based study aimed at what Meyerhold might have called "superiority (not) in name based on the confused and rambling career of Piscator, whose work excluded political predictions in the Weimar Republic, bureaucratic positions in USSR in the 30s, teaching and direction, the Dramatic Workshop in New York after the war, and the discovery of the talents of Hochhut, Kappenberg and Weiss in West Germany in the 60s. Wilton wisely avoids a world which could make all



these disparate activities possible in one career.

A great theme in both these books is the impact on the theatre and on society of Stalin in the late 30s. If the Revolution and its Civil War created legends for early Soviet theatre to explore, then Stalin in the 30s created legends of a totally different kind. Piscator fled Nazi Germany to work in Russia, a devastated state which many German artists were into in the early 30s. It was largely luck when, on a visit to Paris in 1936, he received a telegram from a trapped colleague which read simply "Nicht erlösen" — "Do not leave".

Meyerhold was not so lucky. A more powerful dramatic legend could be made from his experiences than his theatre was liquidated in 1938. In the weeks following, while many friends stayed away from his out of fear, he had three increasing visitors. They were Pasternak, who hardly knew him personally, Buzanov, who had a lot to lose himself (but who managed to hide Meyerhold's papers in the walls of his own house), and Serebryakov, one of his main theatrical opponents, who nevertheless and to everyone's surprise offered him a position directing at the Odessa Theatre. Serebryakov died on 7 August 1938. Meyerhold was arrested on 29 June 1938 and shot in a Moscow prison on 2 February 1940. He had warned his audience to "question the values that endure the coming end".

As Edward Braun concludes, "Given the climate of lies, misdeceptions, fake opinions and hypocrisy that prevailed in the Soviet Union after the 1930s, Meyerhold's life can now be seen as remarkable and the enormity of the crime against him becomes a grim testament to his great power as an artist".



## A.C.T.

AMERICAN ARTS CENTRE (49 4717)

Australian Theatre Workshop

The Flying Dutch by John Rennell

Directed: Warwick Bentz

4-7 11-14 July

CANBERRA THEATRE (48 7908)

Carthaea Opera

The Merchant of Venice by Miguel Delibes, translation: Harry Condomine; Donald Holler

4-6, 11-13 July

An Evening with David Kosogoff

8 July

PLAYHOUSE (49 1480)

Futura Theatre

Clouds by Anouilh; Director: Paul Rosenberg; 10-21 July, except Sunday

Kabuki Dance Company 12-14 July

REED HOUSE THEATRE WORKSHOP (47 0781)

Jesus Company

Jesus' Name

The Empty Mouse

A programme about mice (no pun intended)

Schools in the ACT

THEATRE (49 4712)

Curtains Repertory

A Masque of Friends by David Williamson

Cameron Mackintosh Father 7-14 July, Thursday to Saturday

The Womadale Rose of Arrees 26 by Bessie Breyce

Directed: Ralph Wilson 23 July to 31 August, Wednesday to Saturday

For tickets, please contact Margaret with an 49 1792.

## NEW SOUTH WALES

AUSTRALIAN COMPANY (49 2003)

Programme unconfirmed

ARTS COUNCIL OF NEW SOUTH WALES (49 0410)

School Tours: Bloody Bill a children's play for infants and primary; Metropolitan 11th through 24th July

Modern Man! Theatre for infants, primary and secondary; Central and Outer West 26 July

Sisteract a renaissance musical ensemble for infants, primary and secondary; Parramatta and throughout July

Fair Grounds: glass puppets for infants and primary; North Coast and Hunter areas until July 27

The Barnacle world of puppets for infants and primary; North West and Hunter areas throughout July

Dance Concert: Let's Dance for infants, primary and secondary; South Coast throughout July

While the Fish Bush directed by and starring Lynwood True in Henry Lawson's Pentimento and Fair West areas from July 27. Adults 10pm

Alice Hood: Ballerina; Central West and Metropolitan areas from July 9. Adults 10pm

COLLECT 800/54-HOTEL (49 4702)

Oxford Street, Taylor Square

Gulpy Gums (seen Unseen) by Dick Miner and Malcolm Frawley, director: Malcolm Frawley

piano: Sandra Ridgwell

DRAKE THEATRE (49 2577)

Alice Sleeps One More by Philip Massi, director, Gary Baines, with Steve Brown, Max Collier, Gary Denech, Patrick Dixon, John Higgins, Tony Marano, Michael Ross and Cain Taylor To 14 July

Chapter Five by Noel Saxon, Director: Hayley Gordon, Commences 11 July

FRANK STRAHL'S BULL &amp; BUSH THEATRE RESTAURANT (49 4717)

Thanks for the Memories: A musical review from the turn of the century to today with Noel Murphy, Barbara Wyndham, Dennis, George Lunn, Throughout July

GENESIAN THEATRE (49 7610)

The Cowherd by William Saroyan, director: Alan Pearce, Throughout July

HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE (212 3411)

Annie (infant) director: Georgia Marin with Hayley Collier, Jai Perera, Nancy Hayes, Rio Horan, Anne Dragg and Karen Johns Throughout July

HUNTER VALLEY THEATRE COMPANY (49 26 2739)

Crisp: Playhouse: Novocastle Culture - 1991 season: Director: Ross McElroy, choreography: Christine Kolar, musical direction: Alan McElroy, with: Jennifer McGregor, John Hurman, Valerie Bataz, Linda Clasper

JANE STREET THEATRE (49 1779)

On Our Selections by, Studio Reid and July 13, Nursing for Coal by, Samuel Beckett commences July 15. Both productions directed by George Whaley with Sonny Blaik, Mel Colton, Sally Cuthill, John Clayton, Don Crisby, Vivian Gurnett, Norm Hartmann, Roden Minson, Barry Orr, Goeffrey Ross, Hutchinson and Kerry Muller

KIRRIEMUIR THEATRE (47 197 1415)

Kathleen Battle: Mirren's Room The Banquo: Suite arrière and directed by Peter Quarry Saturday throughout July

LESA LEBBLE PRESENTATIONS (49 3616)

Moby-Dick: Macbeth book ends, touring public primary and secondary schools in Sydney Metropolitan area, Throughout July

MARIAN STREET THEATRE (49 1761)

Fables, musical, director: Alanca Diana with Ray de Pree, Gordan McDowell, Rosalie Fletcher, Peter Lawren, Barbara Forma, Andrew Patterson and Fiona Lloyd, Until July 7. The Chairman by Philip Massi, director: Peter Whisker, Commences July 11

MUSIC HALL THEATRE RESTAURANT (49 4727)

Love to the Devil: written and directed by Shirley Stodd, with: Brian Hockland, Alan Wilson and Karen Wilson, Throughout July

MURK LOFT THEATRE (47 1411)

On Your Own: written by Hilary Blomberg et al, director: William Day with Lee Young and Anna Farley, Throughout July

NEW THEATRE (49 1710)

Dinner With Darling: the Before Days by Michaela Hayes, Director: Wayne van Holland, Throughout July

NIMROD THEATRE (49 1803)

The Lily of Gold by Bessie Breyce, director: Ken Hurst with Les Amussen, Alan Baker, Stuart Campbell, Arthur Dugay, John Frawley, Drew Forsythe, John Gates, John Hamblin, Graham Jones, Chris Orchard, John Scott, Ian Scotland, Murray Vaughan and Paul Winkfield Until July 19

PLAYERS THEATRE COMPANY (49 3211)

Korok Pastoral Theatre: Leader in Colour by Edward Peck and Raymond Devine, Director: Doreen Harvey Throughout July

2000 PLAYHOUSE (49 4844)

Young performers, unconfirmed: Bring along: younger children's musical by Robin Howes with old (Play) directed by Robin Howes - Friday, Saturday and Sunday throughout July

QT THEATRE (part 2) (49 3711)

The Department by David Williamson at Parramatta July 13

REGENT THEATRE (49 0903)

Stars of World War II July 7

The Two Sisters with Romeo Cobert and Rosina Harris from June 16

RIVERINA THEATRE COMPANY

A Floor or More by Rob Hobson, in Wags, Director: Gailen Johnson, Designer: Stephen Ainsc 23-June 7 July

ROCK IS PLAYERS (49 1708 028 1611)

110 Berlin Royal Circle: The Womadale Rose of Arrees 26 by Bessie Breyce, Director: Anthony Buckley, Commences July 17

SCHOOL OF THEATRE (49 0215)

York Theatre: An evening with David Kosogoff July 18 to 21

SHOPFRONT THEATRE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE (49 1704 3604)

Free workshops for young people after school and on weekends in playgrounds, music, dance, video, role play and drama. A CYMS school operates throughout the week for unplaced people. The Shearwater Theatre Training Company presents: unplaced schools with: The Playground Plus for High Schools, The Shearwater PIC for Primary Schools

SPEAKEASY THEATRE RESTAURANT (49 3761)

Lively Night Pic A by Doug Edwards, Director: Ben Fidder, with: Alan Patterson Throughout July

SYDNEY THEATRE COMPANY (49 8122)

Drama Theatre: The Caucasian Chalk Circle by Bertolt Brecht, director: John Clark, with: Paul Cawelti, Helen Hodson, Steven Foley, Karen Gwynn, Jennifer Hayes, Alan Tait, Megan Sleath, Jon Young, Ruth McAllister and Merryn Odele, Commences 4 July

SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE (2826)

Opera Theatre: The Australian Opera on The Australian from the Argonauts by Mossan, conductor: Richard Bonynge, producer: George Ogilvie, Adrienne: by Mossan, conductor: Richard Bonynge, producer: Helen Lawrence

and The Queen of Spain by Schubert

confidante, Richard Horvitz; producer, Roger Razzouk. In repertory throughout July

**NEW THEATRE OF THE DEAF** (03 2101 1200)  
*My Home is Your Castle* life for primary schools

Actions Special Leader tour: Randwick secondary schools. Director, Ian Watson, with Pauline Collier, Margaret Davis, David London, Chris Atkin and Royal Jordan. On tour throughout the metropolitan area

**THEATRE ROTY** (03 4111 0111)

Trifles by Bernard Shaw; director, Peter Williams, with Robbie Lewis, Diana Devine, Helen George, Jacqueline Kerr, Jennifer French, Helen, Tina Harrison and Anne Smith. Throughout July

**SYDNEY CIVIC THEATRE** (02 9519 2661/19)

Carmina Opera  
*The Marriage of Figaro* by Mozart. Director, John Eliot Gardiner; Conductor, David Holler. 13-14 July

For entries contact: Carole Lang on 02 71200

## QUEENSLAND

**BRISBANE ARTS THEATRE** (04 21344)

*A Man For All Seasons* by Robert Bolt. Director, designer, Ian Thomson, with John Gasp, Jack Bourne, Ian Gough, Greg Taitner, Sally Brown-Beveridge. 14 June- 28 July

**LA BOITE** (04 16223)

The Walk Family Show. Directed by the Australian Performing Group, director, Richard Fidowitz. 12 July- 28 Aug

**QUEENSLAND ARTS COUNCIL** (07 32980)

Queensland Ballet Company touring with The Australian and 14 July  
Mandurah Latin American Dance Group tour To 1 Sept

**QUEENSLAND THEATRE COMPANY**

(07 32077)

A Streetcar Named Desire by Tennessee Williams; director, Ruth Blundell; designer, Peter Conie. 11 July- 4 Aug.

**TWELFTH NIGHT THEATRE** (02 521816)

12th Company  
Directed by Tom Stoppard; director, John Milnes; designer, Mark Bridges. To 7 July  
*The Blue Waif* by Alan Bleasdale and *The Last Days of Judah* by Jack Hulbert. Director, John Milnes. 12- 28 July

For entries contact: Sue Satchwell on 269 3818

## SOUTH AUSTRALIA

**STATE OPERA**

The Opera Theatre  
*The Edie* by Dorothy Denyer. Director, Colin George; Designer, Hugh Cummins. 9, 10, 11, 14, 16, 18, 25-27 July

**STAGE COMPANY**

The Bakery Theatre  
Sound of Silence by Eric Mottram. Director, John McPhee. 19 July- 3 Aug. With Sam

**THEATRE GROUP**

The Red Shed, Car Angus and Campbell Sts.  
Miss Queen by Darren Clarke; Director, John McPhee. 19 July- 3 Aug. With Sam

**THEATRE GROUP**

Little Theatre, Adelaide Uni Campus  
The Birthday Party by Harold Pinter. Director, Graham North. 18 July- 4 Aug. With Sam

**Q THEATRE** (01 57131)

10 Haltis Street  
Chrysanthemum book A. J. Ayer by Neville

Philpot and Hobes Chancery. Music by Rob Serafini. 7 July- 4 Aug. With Sam

**THEATRE IN THE HANGE**

Playhouse, Harley C.R.E. Magill  
Ang Lee by William Shakespeare.  
9-14 July, 18-21 July

**AUSTRALIAN DANCE THEATRE**

(02 26811)

South Australian Country Tour 11-21 July Port Lincoln, Whyalla, Broken Hill, Loxton, Millicent, Mt Gambier

For entries contact: Kylie Myfett 02 8518 0110

## TASMANIA

**POLYDOR THEATRE** (02 68799)

The Farnsworth Double. Donald Grey  
Touring 10-15 February 7 July, Goulburn 7 July

**TAZMANIAN PUPPET THEATRE** (03 73996)

Touring 1-6 August, 1-13 July  
Kabulof in the Warehouse Theatre. 16-11 July

**THEATRE ROTY** (03 62646)

Arrest and the Afternoon by George Bernard Shaw  
SAH! Director, Nick Knight. 3-7 July  
David Kosak. 13, 14 July  
George and Michael. 17-18 July

For entries contact: the editorial office on 02 970 54770

## VICTORIA

**ACTORS THEATRE** (03 9201 1000)

First Adventures of Paddington Bear  
Stardom.

**ALEXANDER THEATRE** (03 29120)

Australian Dance Theatre Schools' Programmes  
15 July- 11 am and 2 pm

**AN/PRO** presented by The Monash Players

11-18 July, 13-21 July, 8-10 pm. *Monash  
Graduation Invitations*

**ALIBIA THEATRE** (03 9507 or 34 4007)

Monsoon of Stories. Company One

Touring primary schools. Prices in grade 3

Monsoon and the Golden Apple. Company One

Touring primary schools. Grades 4, 5 & 6

Monsoon by Edward Albee. Company One

Designed and Directed by Peter Tatchell

Touring upper secondary schools.

My Who Would Say Yes or No based on a series

of British short plays. Designed and directed by Peter Charlton. Touring lower secondary schools.

Monsoon by Brian Friel. Company One

Designed and directed by Peter Tatchell.

Touring upper secondary schools.

Paul Polanski and the Fijian appear at the University by Eric Gary. Company One

Designed and directed by Peter Charlton.

Touring lower secondary schools.

Paulini's Queen by Stephen Wilson. SCAT

Indigenous Theatre. Director, Simon Chisholm, designer, Shannan Dutton. To 11 July

Reel Plays. Green Star Adventure Book for Boys by Rob George; director, Bruce Mylon. To 22 Sept

Australian Theatre

Unkle Vines by Andrew Chisholm; designer, Bruce Mylon; designer, Tonya McColm. To 4 Aug

**PALAIS THEATRE** (03 62515)

Programme of Scripts by the Australian Ballet. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 July

John Milwrights And The One Track Road

7 July

**PILGRIM PUPPET THEATRE** (03 21626)

Peter Pan by James Barrie adapted to Gumnut Boys. Mon 10-11, 12-13, 15-16 and 2 pm  
Sat 2-3 pm

**POLYGLOT PUPPETS** (03 15 121)

Mathematical puppet theatre with Magz the Cat and Friends. Touring schools and community centres.

**PRINCESS THEATRE** (03 29111)

La Clemenza di Tito. Mozart. Conductor by

Richard Dallal; producer, Anthony Stock, VSO

**AUSTRALIAN PERFORMING GROUP**  
(PRAM FACTORY) (03 4771213)

From This Day Hence by Edward Bond  
19 July- 26 Aug.  
Back Theatre, Brunswick by Bruce. 2 July- 11 Aug.

**COMEDY THEATRE** (03 4771209)

Desperado by Jim Lewis. Director, Michael Balonson with Denis O'Brien, Robyn Nevin and Howard

**CREATIVE ARTS THEATRE** (03 4771255)

When Will Miles and Miles. Directed from Australia That's Where People Dance On Their Heads  
Explore the Art of Work. Touring in Tertiary Institutions

**DAY NIGHTS AND MUSIC HALL** (GEELONG)

Fridays and Saturdays only

**HOOTLA THEATRE FOUNDATION**

(03 5211)

Downstage. After All by Strindberg; director, Roger Sturman  
Stage Pictures of Africa by Arthur Pogrod. Opening 24 July

Upstage Theatre

Sexual Brexit. Lesser Sex. Australia by Roger Polkow, director, Malcolm Rake. The Amazons by Huwletts Williams. Opening 11 Oct

**HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE** (03 5211111)

Second City touring Rep. Liverpool

**LATE LAUGH THEATRE RESTAURANT**  
(03 942388)

The Circus Show. Circus Oz present the Great Case All That. Sat

**LA MAMA** (03 94555, 34 4645)

The Play's Not To Tell. You owned and performed by Robert McElroy, Jenny Lampert, Elizabeth Drake. 12 July

Time and Space. owned and produced by Judy Rajput and Ben Gattuso. 13 July

In The Name of Your Phoenix. Playwrights and directed by Michael Pate. 13-15 July

Angels of Distinction. written and directed by Graham Henderson (A Shaka Production). 13-15 July

**MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY**

(03 92008)

Russell St Theatre

The Chalk by David Williamson; Director, Simon Chisholm, designer, Shannan Dutton. To 11 July

Reel Plays. Green Star Adventure Book for Boys by Rob George; director, Bruce Mylon. To 22 Sept

Australian Theatre

Unkle Vines by Andrew Chisholm; designer, Bruce Mylon; designer, Tonya McColm. To 4 Aug

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# Guide

THEK AND JOHN'S THEATRE LOUNGE (02) 2256  
Sue Tita and John Newman, Myrtle Roberts, Vic Gordon, and guest artists

VICTORIAN STATE OPERA (03) 386111  
*La Clemenza di Tito* Mikael Pihl 7 July  
Theat. Upon a Time School Company  
Grauman's Egyptian 10 July  
Curtain Call by Peter Newbery  
Curtain Call by Murray Maxwell 10 July  
Henry Smith

#### Major Amateur Companies

Please contact these theaters in the evening for further details

BASIN THEATRE GROUP (02) 2862  
CLAYTON THEATRE GROUP (03) 2787  
HEIDELBERG REP (03) 2786

MALVERN THEATRE COMPANY (03) 8020  
PUMPKIN THEATRE (03) 8037

WILLIAMSTOWN LITTLE THEATRE (03) 2867

1912 THEATRE (03) 2862

For certain curtain times contact on 321 1777

#### NATIONAL THEATRE COMPANY

(03) 538609  
Playhouse  
Dover Straus by Christopher Durang, Stephen  
Barry Collier and Sullivan Society, Backpage  
Producer Ray Dennis conductor Peter Kelly,  
design Graham Macmillan 10 June 14 July  
Chris Langford Carpenter 17 18 July  
Saddlers At Home by Francis Durbridge  
Director Edgar Mitchell From 26 July

#### THE REGAL (03) 1537

A Night with John Savage with Barry  
Brennan 4-11 July

WA ARTS COUNCIL BUDGING PROGRAMME

WA Arts Council Art On Tour to Eastern  
Goldfields

Lilac Posies Paperettes

National Theatre Pub Show, with John Sydney  
and Murray Ogden

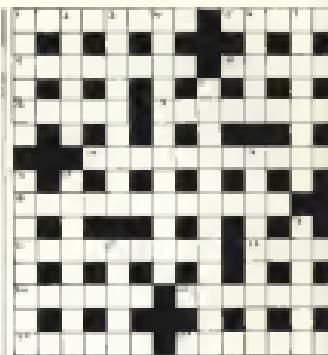
National Theatre TBC

*Angela Davis and the Real Mr Big* Written and  
directed by Richard Tolok

#### WA BALLET COMPANY (09) 1999

Conor Hall based on a theme by  
Elizabeth Backhouse music Vassilis Giannas  
choreography Czech Welsh Festival Season  
10 June 7 July

For curtain times contact Box Office on 3999 6639



#### THEATRIS PRIZE CROSSWORD NO. 1

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Based on (1, 6)

2. The classical punch may get one a spoon (6)

3. 100 as a high-degree probability (6)

4. Play for one to see things (6)

5. She's an easily dispensed right (1, 6)

6. It can be hoped that this is (6)

7. Diana's done a helluva visitation the church (12)

8. High stage of, and might (11, 12)

9. Moonstruck race track of our's (12)

10. Travelled body has been (6)

11. Cut off cover between nearby people (6)

12. Curious that you must fit in advance (6)

13. Rags as readily, that's infectious (6)

14. Estimated several decisions in time (6)

15. \_\_\_\_\_

1. Walk accessibly in right, add legroom (6)

2. Enclosed down to the antiques (6)

3. Asset money? Stutter in a European  
republic (6)

4. About a run on the organ — ensure for this  
performer (1, 6)

5. Image of which an incomplete picture comes  
in everyday (6)

6. Paid the academic and the journalistic, and  
it's sponsored (6)

7. "Violent" for impelling his... violent  
passions of all (10)

8. Howard's process person (6, 6)

9. Let's understand, say the use of a vehicle (6)

10. King Edward emerged of playwright in  
introduce certain (6)

11. Spilling rock equals a hardened, hardy  
member (6)

12. Could be participants at (12, 6)

13. Cyclists to the finish and get a lesser pos  
marked with (6)

14. Guide the six (6)



The first correct and  
drawn on July 18th will  
receive one year's free  
subscription to *The*

Last month's answer  
The winner of the  
month's Crossword is  
Mr. M. V. Shakes, Shakes Park, N.S.W.

## WESTERN AUSTRALIA

HOLE IN THE WALL (09) 2222  
*The Silver Chair* by John Webster Director  
Ray Dennis From 5 July

Continued from page 12

specifies which includes a programme designed to develop language skills for the children with non-English speaking backgrounds and no advantage, very especially for the learning disabled.

#### West Australia

West Australian National Theatre The Team interestingly presents plays that will expand a child's understanding and awareness. Interestingly they also produced two contemporary plays about education in the Government of the Playhouse in 1988: *Classics* about two teachers and a school leader and *Class and Care* written for a nation conference, about the real and imagined worth of a disadvantaged child.

#### Northern Territory

The Northern Territory has an energetic Education Department Drama Advisor who is himself an ex-actor/teacher, and some 100 performances from the Community Group at Burns, Main Street. There may be possibly the most difficult State to work in, but with these ideas, multiplying special attention to amongst your primary arts education & performance arts services, obvious existing one.

One far from throughout Australia the DEC seems at first sight and at some places also working with the schools and thus broadening their children's theatrical experience. In the case there seem no offshoots from the main state company. One has also some centrally produced events that are partly educational, central, and these seem to be curving from the schools out into the communities. And one has a very lively schools' workshop program as yet mainly unstructured but of enormous importance for the children's growth of understanding — and drama.

## Theatre Australia

### Next Month

TA's third birthday issue

Sydney's Lost Theatres

Barry Dickins on the Melbourne  
Scotie.

Big Business & the Arts, Pt 2.

Reviews: Opera, Theatre, Ballet,  
Film, and lots more

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